

A M E R I C A N songwriter

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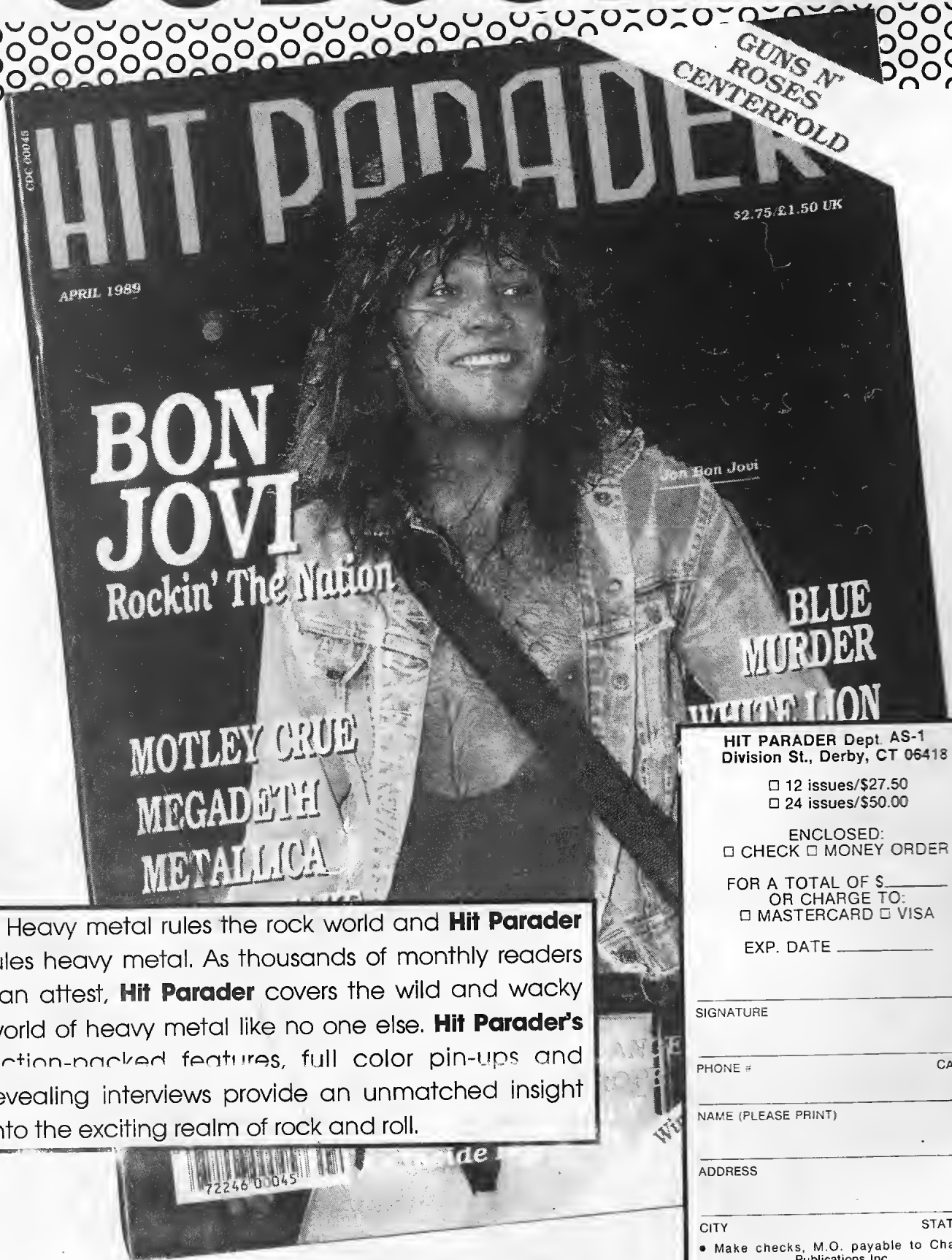
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songwriter

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Cover Photo Credit: Dennis Carney

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Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter in the hopes that you can help me with a problem I have.

I have composed a few country and western songs, no music, just words. I do realize that many people try to write, but very few succeed. I am trying to find a few trustworthy people to send my work to. I am at a complete loss as to what I am supposed to do now. If there is any way that you could help, I would be forever in your debt.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I am serving a lengthy prison term at this time so my contacts are limited at this time.

James H. Davis
Terre Haute, IN

Editor's Note: I suggest you write to one of the songwriter organizations, such as the Nashville Songwriters Assoc. Int'l, 1025 - 16th Ave. So., Nashville, TN 37212, or The Songwriters Guild, 50 Music Sq. W., Nashville, TN 37203 regarding how to pitch your songs and you might also see about starting a writers organization there at the prison if there are enough interested people.

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you and your writers to let you know that your magazine is extremely well written and that the articles are very informative. I am the founder and president of a songwriting group in the Philadelphia-Southern New Jersey area and find that many of our members are getting your magazine at this time, and I would like to say that it is money well spent.

One thought that has been brought up on several occasions at our meetings has been the lack of articles written on songwriters who have made it in the music business that do not eat, drink, sleep and live in Nashville, Los Angeles or New York. For up and coming professional songwriters, articles written about songwriters who have made it in the music business and have relatives in the music business or are married to someone famous in the music business do very little to help up and coming songwriters learn about the business of songwriting.

I am not taking away from a person who has talent and good connections, but do feel that an article in each issue about a songwriter who really struggled to make it would be both inspirational and informative. I also realize that there are interesting stories about people who just happen to have good connections or relatives in the business. I do find those stories of interest, but I would like to expand the horizons of up and coming songwriters who read your publication that opportunities for those who do not live in a music mecca do exist.

Bruce M. Weissberg
Westmont, NJ

Editor's Note: I would like to write articles about songwriters who do not live in a music mecca and have had their songs cut by major recording artists. However, there are not many of these success

stories. I might also add that the people we write about did struggle, and if the articles seem to indicate they did not have to struggle, then we are misleading our readers. By the way, one of our columnists, Tommy Rocco, is from your area of the country. Feel free to write him in care of the magazine for his opinion on this subject as well.

Dear Friends,

Just a quick note to say thank you. First, thanks for being there for both professional and amateur songwriters alike.

Secondly (and more specifically) thank you for publishing a feature on Pete Anderson (of whom I am proudly an ardent admirer). It was surprising to find it in *American Songwriter*, but the slant of the piece was toward songwriters, so it all made wonderful sense.

Just to clear one thing up, Pete produced both the second and third albums by Michelle Shocked (in addition to all of the electric guitar work on both).

Gwen L. Cohen
Annapolis Junction, MD

Dear Sirs,

I would like to congratulate you and thank you for your great Jan/Feb 1990 issue. What a great help for local songwriter organizations and every person needing this information. I am sure it will become a source book for us in the Utah Songwriters Association, which by the way was not included in your list (an oversight I'm sure). We are alive and well in Salt Lake City and included a favorable review of your publication in our newsletter so would appreciate a mention in yours.

We have read with great interest the articles you have on the forum panels "The Times They Are A Changing: Songwriting In The 90's" as they help us to understand the changes going on in songwriting and in Nashville.

One of my favorite articles is the in-depth, look and critique of a song in "Living That Country Song" by Kelly Delaney. It helps me to look at my own songs objectively and to compare them to see how they stack up with the ones reviewed.

I believe to be in the know, *American Songwriter* readers need to read the *American Songwriter*.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Boone-Smith

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This note in brief. Now retired after 34 years in Minneapolis, we have returned to the grandeur of four seasons in our own native Upper Peninsula of Michigan, still pursuing the same hobbies and obsessions of a half-century ago, namely, skiing, skating, hunting, baseball, violin and last not least, music and poetry.

Nevertheless, having this childhood obsession with music and poetry — and having a Master's in

public school music, this is yet our first real inchoative step into your difficult but fascinating domain. And so, gentlemen of nobility, if a lady exhibits measurable pulchritude, do give her a double look.

We hereby submit to you three of 14 lyrics written in the past 14 months, and we feel justified in believing that with the mellifluous music we've added, which like a vignette, superimposes each lyric, even Mr. Kosser, a critic who knows what he is talking about, upon hearing twice, might just say once "not too bad."

Emil Platzke
Bruce Crossing, MI

Editor's Note: Not having seen your songs, I cannot make a comment on them, but you write beautiful letters!

Dear American Songwriter,

In 1987 I began to look for companies to buy my work. The list of companies goes on and on. Recently I wrote to a Christian Ministries, they referred me to your company. In July/August issue you had song lyric competition. That would be ideal for me.

I'd like to subscribe to your magazine, hopefully I will be able to submit some of my work for song-lyric competition.

Everyone has always told me my work is so wonderful, friends, family and companies I have written to. Maybe finally I can get somewhere.

I honestly believe my work can go to the top. One company wanted for me to make a demo. It didn't seem right for a reason I'm not sure of!

Thanks for lending an ear.

Stephen Michael
Granite City, IN

Editor's Note: You can enter our contest without being a subscriber to the magazine. You don't give any details regarding the demo you mentioned, but if someone is asking you to pay them money to publish a song, that is not standard business practice in the song publishing business and you were correct in your feeling that something was not quite right.

Dear Editor,

Thanks for putting out such a great magazine as *American Songwriter*. I really enjoy the articles about pop, rock, country and Christian writers. After reading an article about Steven Curtis Chapman a couple issues ago, I went out and bought his album *Real Life Conversation*. It knocked me out! What fantastic songwriting! Keep the good stuff coming.

Amy Tansey
Cincinnati, OH

The News Is Out

Fred Koller traveled to New England, Birmingham and Chicago to conduct seminars, combining the informative series with concert performances.

Two songs written by **Pamela Phillips Oland** have been included in recent movies: the theme for *Cage* and "I'll Be Your Eyes," recorded by **Anne Murray** for inclusion in *Judgment*.

Kevin Odegard is retiring as executive director of the National Academy of Songwriters in Los Angeles. Interim acting director is **Dan Kirkpatrick**.

Opryland Music Group's publishing division, Acuff-Rose Music and Milene Music has had success licensing songs to films, television, home videos and commercials in the past 18 months. Among the films utilizing OMG songs include *Steel Magnolias*, *Blaze*, *Mississippi Burning*, *Heartbreak Hotel*, and *Miss Firecracker*. Television shows using their songs included *A Current Affair*, *Miami Vice*, *Late Night With David Letterman* and *Perfect Strangers*, while commercial use included "Bread and Better" for **Friskies Cat Food** and **Quaker Rice Cakes**; "Bye Bye Love" by **Air Canada** and "Hey Good Lookin'" by **New Mexico Gas**.

John Rosasco composed the score for the one hour documentary, "Frederic Remington: The Truth Of Other Days," featuring **Gregory Peck**. The premier was part of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's office of Film and Television Third Annual Gala in New York.



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

Russ Taff became the first male artist to debut an album, *The Way Home*, at the top of the contemporary gospel album sales charts while two singles from the album, "It Was Love" and "Farther On," were at the top of the AC, rock and CHR singles charts, according to **John Styll**, editor of *CCM* magazine. From left bottom row: **James Hollihan, Jr.**, co-producer and writer; **ASCAP's Connie Bradley**; **Taff**; writer **Tori Taff**. From left, top row: **Darrell Brown**, writer; **Word Records' Tom Ramsey**; **ASCAP's Tom Long**; **Taff's manager Zach Glickman**.



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

A two-part television special featuring several Nashville songwriters which has begun airing was produced in Nashville. From left: producers **Roy Sinkovich** and **Herb Sudzin**; **NSAI** director emeritus **Maggie Cavender**; songwriters **Chris Gantry** and **Razzy Bailey**. Not pictured was the third producer, **Don Aldrich**.

The Nashville Entertainment Association hosted a music publisher and A&R panel during their recent Extravaganza '90, featuring **Patrick Clifford**, A&M Records, New York; **Heather Irving**, Wing/Polygram, New York; **Michael Gallelli**, CBS Records, New York; **Johnny Wright**, Warner/Chappell, Nashville; **Sam Ramage**, EMI, Nashville; **Tracy Gershon**, CBS Tree/Nashville. **Kurt Denny** of BMI moderated the panel.

The winter semester of Songcraft Seminars introduced a new workshop by **Sheila Davis**, "Whole-Brain Songwriting," which presented techniques based on split-brain specialization theory to help writers produce more successful songs. Davis is basing the new element on the principle



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

It was two for one at Warner/Chappell in Nashville when the writers of the chart topping "Burnin' Old Memories" and "Bayou Boys" gathered for a little celebration. From left: Troy Seals, who co-wrote "Bayou Boys" with Eddy Raven; Larry Boone and Gene Nelson, who co-wrote "Burnin' Old Memories"; Kathy Mattea, who recorded "Memories"; producer Allen Reynolds and Warner/Chappell's Tim Wiperman.

that writing style mirrors thinking style, and attempts to help lyricists and composers identify their preferred thinking style, then offers techniques to tap less-preferred styles.

Jerry Jeff Walker's newsletter gave a tip of the hat to the people at radio stations in 1989 who helped keep the voice of the maverick alive, not just with Walker, but others like him who have a tradition of individualism. The newsletter offers hope

these stations would continue to do the same in the 90's. Amen.

Randy Travis, Don Schlitz and Lib Hatcher wrote a song for upcoming Coca Cola commercials featuring the theme "Can't beat the real thing." Travis will film television and radio spots for the soft drink company. Elton John will be a part of the Diet Coke campaign.

Harris-Richardson Music Group celebrated three number one's in 1989: "What's



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

ASCAP's fifth annual gospel songwriters workshop was led by Mark Baldwin, and well attended at the Nashville offices. On hand to give helpful hints at one of the sessions were from left: ASCAP's Tom Long; Word Records Denise Marcia; Terri Gibbs; Baldwin; songwriter Don Koch; producer/writer Bubba Smith and producer Bruce Carroll.

Going On In Your World," co-written by Royce Porter and David Chamberlain; "High Cotton," co-written by Roger Murrah and Scott Anders; and "Out Of Your Shoes," co-written by Patti Ryan, Jill Wood and Sharon Spivey.

South Plains College in Levelland, Texas has awarded their Tom T. Hall Scholarship to Dawn Watson, a 27-year old sophomore bluegrass music major from Lincoln, Neb. The first scholarship in honor of the songwriter was given in 1987.

Keith Hyman has arranged a collection of Rolling Stones singles, including "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Let's Spend The Night Together" and "Ruby Tuesday" for



PHOTO BY BETH GWINN

Garth Brooks celebrated his first number one single, "If Tomorrow Never Comes," co-written with Kent Blazy, with his wife Sandy at a recent party for him in Nashville.

sheet music publisher Columbia Pictures Publications/Belwyn.

Kix Brooks and Don Cook will lead ASCAP'S 10th country songwriter workshop, sponsored by the ASCAP Foundation, will begin Tuesday, March 20 at 7 p.m. at the society's Nashville office. The workshop will feature guest panellists including composers, lyricists, publishers, producers, performers, arrangers and other representatives from the music industry. It

will meet on six consecutive Tuesday nights from 7 - 9 p.m. The workshops are free of charge, but is limited to 30 participants. Writers interested in applying for the workshop are requested to send a resume, typed lyric sheets and cassette tape with two original songs, marked with name, address and telephone number to **ASCAP Country Workshop**, 66 Music Square West, Nashville, TN 37203. Deadline for entries is March 2.

Nathan Brown has the title cut, "Words Will Never Do," on the **Cynthia Clawson** project for Dayspring Records.

Tony Melendez and **Crystal Gayle** performed a song co-written by **Mark Comden** on the television special "Come From The Heart."

Writer's Digest Books continues with its line of helpful books for the songwriters. Included in the company's latest onslaught are "You Can Write Great Lyrics" by **Pamela Phillips Oland**, a staff writer for **Almo Irving Music** who has had cuts by



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

Sparrow Records teamed with **BMI** to host a reception for the release of singer/songwriter **Steven Curtis Chapman's** album *More To This Life*. From left: **Lorenz Creative Services' Michael Puryear**; **Sparrow Records' Peter York**; **Chapman**; **producer Phil Naish**; **Lorenz Creative Services' Steve Lorenz**; **BMI's Joe Moscheo**.



PHOTO COURTESY ASCAP

ASCAP hosted a luncheon for out of town guests during the **Nashville Music Extravaganza** at **RCA Studio B**. The studio was chosen because the Extravaganza took place during the week of **Elvis' birthday**. Standing from left: **Brian Williams** of **Third National Bank** and president of **NEA**; **Loris Weymouth** of

Virgin Records, **New York**; **ASCAP's Marcy Drexler**; **Paul Burton** of **Chrysalis Records**, **New York**. Seated from left: **Josh Deutsch**, **A&R**, **Capitol Records**, **New York**; **ASCAP's Donna Spangler**; **Hugo Burnham**, **A&R**, **Island Records**; **Sofia Ames-Leak**, **A&R**, **Atlantic Records**, **New York**.

NSAI 12th ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The Nashville Songwriter Association International (NSAI) will hold its annual spring songwriting symposium "Welcome To My Office," March 16 and 17 at Nashville's Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel. Workshops include "This Business Called Music," "Welcome To The Office Of Co-writers" and the critique session "Welcome To My Office-Publishers and Writers." **Lorianne Crook** and **Charlie Chase** will host the annual Friday night Super Showcase, which will include performances by **Mary Chapin Carpenter**, **Lacy J. Dalton**, **Don Henry**, **Billy Hill**, **Janis Ian**, **Kathy Mattea**, **Wild Rose**, **Jon Vezner** and 1989 NSAI Hall of Fame inductee **Whitey Shafer**. Registration can be made through NSAI, 1025 16th Avenue South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37212.



PHOTO COURTESY EDELMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Philip Bailey, right, lead singer of **Earth, Wind & Fire**, presented **Martin Blockson** of Boston, Mass., with a plaque as grand prize winner in the 1989 Kentucky Fried Chicken Amateur Songwriting contest, urban contemporary category. Bailey recorded Blockson's winning song, "Wait For Me," for distribution to radio stations.



PHOTO BY BETH GWINN

The **Questionnaires** debuted their new album at a Nashville concert where, from left: manager **Kay Clark**, BMI's **Kurt Denny** and band members **Tom Littlefield**, **Doug Lancio**, **Chris Feinstein**, **Hunt Waugh** and **Jay Joyce** celebrated after the show.



PHOTO BY ALAN L. MAYOR

Don McLean was tapped to rerecord his hit song "Vincent" for a PBS special, *To Paint The Stars*, for the anniversary of the birth of Vincent Van Gogh. From left: **Dave Burgess**, publisher/producer; **McLean**; **Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison**, producer of the show.

Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin, Anne Murray and Gladys Knight; and "Preventive Medicine For Songwriters", by Kent J. Klavens, a Los Angeles lawyer specializing in music industry matters and copyright law. The 1990 Songwriter's Market is also out. ☐

SIGNINGS AND SUCH....

John Phillips has signed with The Benson Company as a singer/songwriterBilly Crain with Frankly Scarlett Music



Billy Crain and Gerd Muller

owned by Gerd Muller....Larry McClain to Five Star Music Group as West Coast representative....Staci Frenes and Donald McLachlan have signed long-term exclusive writing agreements with Lita Music...George Searcy, Stephen Murray and Mark Jean have signed long term publishing agreements with Tourmaline Music, Inc....Aaron Brown and Dave

Lehman have signed a writers agreement with ASCAP...Steve "Bulldog" Bivens has opened a record production/artist development and consulting company, Nashville Skyline Productions. He will also handle publishing and promotions through the company.

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Don't Send Money . . .

Use Your Money For A Trip To One Of The Music Centers.



There are some things new songwriters just can't comprehend until they run into the circumstance when writing a song. There are other things that can be learned through examples in books and columns like the ones in *American Songwriter*.

These are things that you might have to read and hear several times before you grasp the point the writer is trying to get across to you.

There is one thing, however, that you should have to read only once to comprehend. I've told you before; if you've ever visited the offices of the Nashville Songwriters Association, the Songwriters Guild or any other reputable songwriters organization, you've heard it there too. I still get questions about it, though, so I'm going to reiterate one more time: Don't send money to anyone to have them put music to your songs, to have them make a demo of your songs, or to publish your songs.

I know it sounds tempting when you read an advertisement that promises to put great music to your lyrics, or put music to a poem which can then be termed a song, but stay away from it. Especially stay away from the company that offers to publish your song(s) for a fee. Legitimate publishers don't charge you to publish your songs, they pay (usually) for demos of songs they think have the potential to be cut.

All you will get if you answer any of those advertisements or sign up with any of those publishers is the chance to spend your money. Usually it's not a lot of money, \$60, \$70 or \$80 to have a song demoed or set to music. It's still money, and it's the money that keeps these people in business. It may even seem like not very much money to a struggling writer who so badly wants to hear what these people tell you: "Your song is great. I don't know why no one has published (demoed) it for you before." That may be music to your ears, but the next sentence is the clincher: "Just give me \$100 (or whatever the amount) and we'll put it to music (demo it, publish it) for you."

When you think about it, the low cost should be an immediate clue to the new writer. Getting a song demoed is useless unless you do it right, and to do it right will cost a lot more than the money these companies usually require.

The demos are usually done by musicians who are hired as cheaply as possible, who care nothing about what the finished product sounds like as long as they have cash in hand when they walk out the door.

There are writers here in Nashville who can do demos cheaper, but usually those are the ones who have access to a studio. They might also play all the instruments themselves, or swap their talents with another writer/musician and together they do all the work. If you can do this with someone in your hometown who has a studio (an eight track is usually big enough), and you can get a professional sounding demo, then you should think about doing that.

Professional musicians cost money. The musicians these so-called demo experts use are not professional. It's just a rip-off, another way to get money from someone who doesn't know a lot about the music business. Don't do it!

The same goes for sending money to someone to put music to your lyrics or poems. Basically what these people do is have a dozen or so melodies that they fit to whatever lyrics/poems are sent to them. I'd guess they aren't very good melodies, either.

If your lyrics are good, you can find someone to put music to them. Seek out someone in a local songwriter organization, or inquire when you attend a songwriters seminar for someone who writes music who might be interested in working with you. If no one wants to work with you, it might be that they don't think your song is good enough to spend time on. If they do agree to work with you, they will do it for one-half of the writers' credit, not for a fee. If you get a co-writer, it also means you'll have two people trying to get your song cut and that makes the odds better.

Save your money and put it towards a trip to Nashville, Los Angeles, New York or another music center where there are legitimate publishers and musicians who will work with you. That's not to say you don't need to be careful in these places too; you do. Always check out the reputation of a company before you do any business with them. That's standard business practice, whether it's music or building. If you want to demo some of your songs, check out the prices at different studios around town to determine the best deal.

Call NSAI and SGA, the National Academy of Songwriters or LASS — they can all offer advice and help you head in the right direction. That's what they are there to do.

Thank you for the letters and comments I've been receiving. If you have any subjects you'd like me to address, please feel free to write to me in care of the magazine. □

Tommy Rocco has had cuts by Highway 101, Anne Murray, T.G. Sheppard, The Kendalls, Mel McDaniel and Kenny Rogers. A cut by newcomer Marcia Thornton, "A Bottle Of Wine And Patsy Cline," which was made into a video, is being played on VH-1's country video segment. You can write to Rocco in care of the magazine at 27 Music Sq. E., Nashville, TN 37203.

CHANGING LINES RESULTED IN A HIT

Never Be Afraid To Take Requests



Occasionally a situation arises where recording artists ask songwriters if they would object to making a few changes in their songs. Often, the writers' willingness to do so spells the difference in whether or not that song will be recorded by that particular artist.

One such example of a song where certain definite, but really inconsequential lyrical changes had to be made before the artist would record it is "I Believe In You." Written by Roger Cook and Sam Hogin, this song, recorded by Don Williams in 1979, is well over a million performances and should continue to earn royalties for many years to come.

"I Believe In You" was nominated for a Grammy and for Song of the Year by both the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music. And as co-writer Hogin notes, "If it wasn't for this song, I'd probably be doing something else today." Ironically, a few little lyrical changes literally did change Hogin's life.

Adding to the irony is that Williams' co-producer, Garth Fundis, who originally heard the demo of "I Believe in You," was uncertain that Williams would like the song. But he played the song for him anyway. Well, Williams did like the song, only with a few alterations. There were several lines he simply didn't feel comfortable singing.

Let's examine the changes the writers made in their song. An important factor to keep in mind, I think, is to change the lines the artist finds objectionable without affecting the context of the song itself. That's the challenge.

Actually, as Hogin recalls, the writers began changing the song from the first time they worked on it.

Initially the opening line was "I don't believe in apple pie," which conceivably could have taken the song in an entirely different direction. The tune could have made more of a political statement rather than a personal one. In general, songs that make political statements are recorded by singer-songwriters singing their own tunes. They are extremely difficult to pitch to other artists to record. Hence, making this a personalized song greatly enhanced its chances of getting recorded.

The lines which Williams asked the writers to change are in the second verse, the third verse and the second chorus. In addition, he wanted a bridge which the song originally didn't have.

At first this might sound like "I like your song except for the words and music," but this really isn't the case. In the world of professional songwriting, nothing is etched in granite. If you want

to get songs recorded sometimes you have to be willing to bend.

The lines in question were "Sometimes I just don't give a damn" in the second verse, changed to "Sometimes I wonder who I am"; "The rising cost of gettin' high" in the third verse, changed to "The rising cost of gettin' by"; and "I believe in rock 'n roll" in the second chorus, changed to "I believe in magic."

So, if you match up the lines you'll see that nothing was substantially changed in the song. The writers still said what they wanted to say, but (and here's the important part) they said it in a way that the artist could feel comfortable singing it. And one could argue that the rewrite really did make it a better song.

We'll never know how many songs go unrecorded because the artist doesn't like a particular line or even just one word. All the songwriter ever knows is that the artist passed on the song. So when an artist goes out of his or her way to request a re-write, writers should be flattered and go out of their way to make the changes in a way that works for both parties. Obviously, Williams felt strongly about the song or he never would have contacted the writers.

If we look at the song (with or without the changes), we'll see that "I Believe In You" is really two sets of lists — things I believe in and things I don't believe in. No doubt they had pages of possibilities and finally narrowed them down to three verses and choruses. The verses designed to play off against the choruses. One sets up the other.

Then they simply set up a rhyme pattern, in this case an A-A, B-B, C-C, D-D in the verses and no rhyme scheme in the choruses. The chorus structure is so short and to the point that you really can get by without rhymes, especially since each line begins with "I believe."

The last line of the chorus, as simple as it is, is also the most profound. By saying "I believe in you," the writers reduce it all to a one-on-one situation. And that's always good. It'll work every time.

As for the bridge, it provides a melodic change, which the song needed, and lyrically it provides an interlude which builds upon the personal theme which ends the choruses. Usually bridges are a lyrical diversion from the personal. In this case the exact opposite is what is called for in the song.

I guess all writers are a bit apprehensive about what an artist might do to their songs. I remember one sunny afternoon when I was pitching washers with Guy Clark. I told him about a time I'd seen David Allan Coe perform Clark's classic "Desperados Waiting For A Train." At the song's conclusion, Coe mooned the audience. I asked Guy how he felt about that. In his slow, thoughtful drawl he said "Well, everybody has their own way of interpreting a song."

So the moral here is if a recording artist asks you to make a few changes here and there, you'd best go on and do it. It's really painless, and sometimes, as in the case with "I Believe In You," the changes can actually make for a better song.

I Believe In You

By Roger Cook and Sam Hogan

I don't believe in superstars, organic foods and foreign cars
I don't believe in the price of gold, the certainty of growing old
That right is right and left is wrong, that north and south can't get along
That east is east and west is west and being first is always best

Chorus:

But I believe in love, I believe in babies
I believe in mom and dad and I believe in you

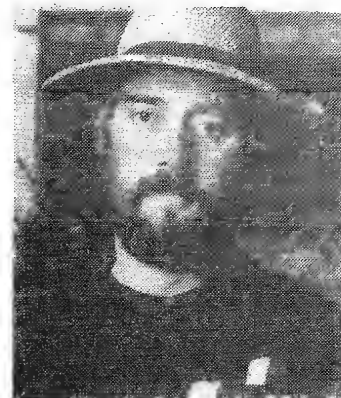
I don't believe that heaven waits for only those who congregate
I like to think of God as love, he's down below, he's up above
He's watching people everywhere, he knows who does and doesn't care
And I'm an ordinary man, sometimes I wonder who I am
Repeat Chorus

Bridge:

I know with all my certainty what's going' on with you and me
Is a good thing, it's true I believe in you

I don't believe virginity is as common as it used to be
In workin' days and sleepin' nights, that black is black and white it white
That Superman and Robin Hood are still alive in Hollywood
That gasoline's in short supply, the risin' costs of gettin' by
Repeat Chorus

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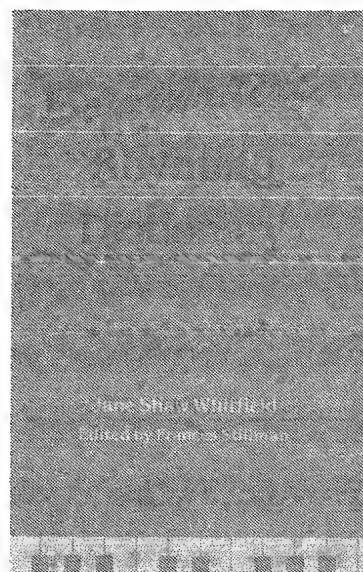
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Songwriting Is Her Priority

By Deborah Evans Price

It's no secret that Dolly Parton is a woman of many talents. As a singer, songwriter and actress she has carved a successful niche for herself in the entertainment community. Of all the many facets of her career, however, songwriting is nearest and dearest to her heart.

"It's number one," she responded enthusiastically when asked, on a scale of one to ten, how important her songwriting was to her career. "I've always prided myself as a songwriter more than anything else. That's my personal feelings. That's not to say that's what I do best. That's my way of speaking for myself and speaking for life the way I see it. It's an ability that I have and I've always loved being able to express myself."

Parton doesn't perceive songwriting to be just another way to make money in her career. "It's therapy. It's fun. It's creative. I love getting on a big writing binge and staying up a couple three days working on songs and knowing at the end of those two or three days that I've created something that was never in the world before. It's like a feeling of creating, not that the same stories ain't been told before, but it ain't been told through my point of view. And it's my way of relaxing. Songwriting is a hobby and to me it's therapy. It's a joy. It's a thrill. It's like mind exercises or something."

Though the personal satisfaction Parton gets from penning tunes is the most important part of writing to her, she also has more than a few tangible rewards for her efforts. She won a Grammy for the tune "Nine to Five," which she penned for the movie in which she co-starred with Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda. She's received numerous BMI awards. Many of the tunes she's written, such as "To Daddy," "Coat of Many Colors" and "I Will Always Love You," have become standards.

As a child growing up near Sevierville, Tennessee, Parton's imagination took her far beyond the limitations of her poor Smokey Mountain life. Though she may not have had every material luxury, she had a rich imagination that led her to begin writing songs at an early age.

"My first song I wrote before I could write," she recalls. "My momma wrote it down. I would just always write songs about things that I understood and I could always rhyme things. I always had a gift of rhyme. I wrote a song called 'Little Tiny Tassle Top' about a little corn cob doll I had because we didn't have store bought toys. I had this little doll that Daddy had burnt poker holes for eyes in and momma put the corn silk back on it and made a dress. I was five years old.

"Then I started playing guitar and writing serious when I was about seven and I started singing on radio and TV when I was 10. And I've been writing ever since."

Obviously the subject matter in her tunes has matured over the years and Parton says her experiences have helped hone and shape her craft.

"I've improved just by growing older and living. Also I think my writing gets better because my life is more involved. I can still write country better than anything and that's something that never left me. That's why some of the songs on this album [*White Limozeen*] are a little special. It was so easy for me to write those. It's harder for me to write songs that are not as true to myself and my own personality. I just write about whatever I'm feeling at the time or whatever I'm going through."

Her current album, *White Limozeen*, showcases Parton's writing skills as well as her talent for spotting hit tunes penned by other writers. She recorded an REO Speedwagon tune written by Kevin Cronin called "Time for Me to Fly," giving the pop tune a bluegrass flavor. She recorded songs by popular Nashville tunesmiths such as Diana Rae, Jim Rushing, Wayland Patton, and Karen Staley.

Parton co-wrote the autobiographical title tune with friend and fellow songwriter Mac Davis. The two also co-wrote and sang "Wait Till I Get You Home."

"Mac is one of the most gifted songwriters in the world," Parton enthuses. "Mac got pretty rich and he was playing a lot of golf and wasn't writing as much as I thought he ought to be and I just hated seeing all that talent go to waste. So I called him one day and said 'why don't you put that golf bag in the closet for a few days and why don't we get together and write a few songs.'"

On this lp she also finally recorded the Don Francisco tune "He's Alive," a gospel song that she had wanted to record for years. "My husband Carl and I were traveling back from California and we were riding through this little town and listening to the local radio station and they played that song and we both got chill bumps. So we stopped and called that station to find out who the person was and when we got to Nashville I tracked down that album.

"I always intended to do it because it moved me and I hadn't had the opportunity because I wanted to do it with somebody that was Christian, which Ricky [*White Limozeen* producer Ricky Skaggs] is, somebody that accepted that whole concept. You have to really feel something and be passionate about it and believe in it to do it. I felt Ricky was the perfect one to do it with because he is so passionate about his religion. I'm not as religious as Ricky but my faith is as strong in its way. The song meant a lot to me."

Content was obviously a consideration for Dolly in recording "He's Alive." When asked what other factors she considers when reviewing outside material, Parton replied "I look for a song that I can sing, that the chorus structure is something I can sing, not being a trained singer. I look for subjects that I understand and that

make sense to me, things that are real rather than just a bunch of hokey stuff, or something that triggers something in me or something I think I could do a great performance on.

"Usually it's stuff that I should have wrote myself, but didn't have the talent to say it exactly that way. Usually I say 'why didn't I think of that. I should have wrote that or I could have wrote that.' So I guess it just means things that move me and places that I've been, just songs I never got to (write), I guess."

When it comes to the type of demos she prefers to hear, Dolly says it really doesn't matter if they are full blown demos or just simple piano/vocal or guitar/vocal demos.

"It doesn't matter to me if I hear a song that I love," she says. "If I hear a good song I'll know it. I can always picture what music would do to it."

"I always try to demo my songs before I send them places because I know some people don't have the imagination, but I am a writer and an arranger in my head so I can hear a song where maybe some artist might not be able to."

As a recording artist, Parton can record her own songs, but that doesn't keep her from wanting to get cuts by other artists. When somebody does cut one of her tunes, she's not opposed to them taking a little creative license and molding the song to fit their needs.

When asked who she'd like to cut one of her songs, the 43 year old entertainer replied, "Everybody, anybody. I'll take anybody. I'm always flattered that anybody would record my songs, even if they change them. Certain ones of my songs, I'll hear somebody do it and I've had mixed emotions. I think either 'wow that's great. I never thought of hearing it like that' or I'll think 'oh Lord they've ruined that song.'"

"But you're still glad as a writer that they did it, no matter how it turns out. You're just glad that somebody liked your song enough to record it. But you do have your favorites. I guess the ones I'd like to record my songs right now are the ones having hits and make me the most money."

As the interview winds to a close, Parton admits that it's difficult to give advice to aspiring songwriters because there is no clear cut road to success as a writer.

"There's no such thing as a set pattern," she says. "Like somebody was asking me yesterday about somebody else that they really believed in, saying this person was such a great writer and great singer and that they were thinking about trying to do something for that person, they themselves also being a writer and singer."

"I said 'you've got to be crazy. This person has been in the business that many years and they're still working on another job and expecting somebody else to get out there and do it for them. You need to pay attention to your own music and if that person is sincere they'll find a way.'"

"You have to be willing to sacrifice. You have to be willing to pay those prices. And I've never seen it done any differently unless you were just the luckiest person in the world to have somebody come knockin' at your door and say 'hey I'm opportunity. I'm gonna take your tapes' — and



Dolly

PHOTO COURTESY GALLIN MOREY

that has happened.

"But to be realistic a body just has to stick with it. If you really believe that's true talent and that's all you know and want to do, you'll find a way to do it. Just don't give up if that's where you think you're true talent is. That's not to say you can't work on a job where you can make some money, we all have to do that, but you still have to get out and pretty much put yourself into it." □

SONGWRITER BRINGS IMAGINARY FRIEND TO LIFE

Childhood Experiences Created Biff



BIFF, THE FRIENDLY PURPLE BEAR

Words & Music By Dick Feller

Now I was a play horse you pull with a string
On wheels where my legs should be,
And he was the boy who pulled the toy
Around the tree house tree.
For the longest time there was just us two,
The boy and the horse that was me,
Until the day the purple bear
Came to live in the tree house tree

Well it was early one spring,
I was tied by my string
In a field of the make believe farm.
When around the house the boy and the bear
Came marching arm in arm.
"This is Biff," said the boy to me
"He's the friendly purple bear"
And Biff stooped down and stroked my mane
With a paw of purple hair

"Biff has come to stay," said the boy,
"And pretend with you and me
And he can do anything
A boy and a purple bear can do."

And taking the cue Biff bowed from the waist,
Then leaped and clicked his heels.
Then down to the ground in three somersaults
That ended in four cartwheels.
He whirled and twirled and stood on his head,
The boy giggled and slapped his side.
I laughed so hard that wooden tears
Rolled out of my painted eyes.

So Biff came to stay in the tree house tree,
And long days came without end
For the boy and the toy and the purple bear

And serious games of pretend.
Like the cowboy game with the boy as sheriff,
And Biff as the Bandit King,
That always ended with all the outlaws
In the jail by the long rope swing.
And the great pony race that lasted for days
Around the flower bed.
Ahh that was a tough one but lucky for us
I won by a wooden head.

And the day we entered the pirates cove
'Neath a bush on the alley side,
Biff had a sword, a paper hat,
And a patch across his eye.
There was always the danger of outlaws or Indians
Or creatures from outer space,
And without the courage of the three of us,
We might have lost the whole place.

But we were bound by the code
Of the musketeers,
Such golden hours were shared,
By the freckled faced boy, the wooden horse
And Biff the purple bear.

But as summers passed the boy grew taller
And his voice took a strange new ring.
And his visits were few to the tree house tree
And never to the long rope swing.

Biff the purple bear grew sad
as he climbed down the tree house tree,
He shook his head, "I'm afraid," he said,
"He's forgotten you and me.
Seems old wooden friend of mine
We've outlasted his boyhood years."
Then he turned and was gone across the lawn
In a trail of purple tears.

Now I've been put to pasture in the old tree house,
But at times I've seen from afar
A strange tall boy who mows the lawn
And tinkers about his old car,
But just today I looked past the house
And down the sidewalk, I swear,
Came a new little boy with a wooden horse toy
Followed by a purple bear.

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I can't remember the first time I heard this song. I do know that I never forgot it, and later when I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing songwriter Dick Feller, I was a little nervous about interviewing the person who wrote "Biff The Friendly Purple Bear."

Feller, one of those people with a quick sense of humor, has written such songs as "Lord Mr. Ford," "The Credit Card Song" and "Instant Glue."

Obviously he has a serious side, too. In addition to "Biff," he's penned "Some Days Are Diamonds," "Any Old Wind That Blows," "The Lady's A Woman" and "(I Love You) What Can I Say."

A native of Bronaugh, Missouri, Feller drifted to California before settling in Nashville to pursue being a songwriter.

"Nobody ever told me I couldn't write songs but I thought it was a dream, and as soon as somebody told me it was a dream, I could cut that nonsense out," Feller said, adding that he can't remember when he didn't write songs.

"I came back to Nashville (he'd visited briefly before going to California) to seriously give it (writing) another shot...to find that one person who would tell me my songs were horrible. Sure enough, the first place I went told me I should go home...luckily I had several other appointments that day that I had to show up for!"

Feller found himself writing for Johnny Cash's publishing company, and Cash cut "Any Old Wind That Blows." Cash came in one day and said he was doing a children's album and asked Feller to write some children's song to go on the album.

"I wrote 'Friends Of Ranger Ed' and 'Biff The Friendly Purple Bear,'" Feller said. "When I started to write 'Biff, The Friendly Purple Bear,' I just started to think about me as a kid and my imaginary friend.

"There was a mulberry tree on my grandfather's farm, and you could climb up in that tree and look down over the fields and over a stream. I'd sit up in that tree and all my imaginary friends would be around me.

"Then I thought about my cousin Ray, who had an imaginary friend named Jim. Ray was always saying 'Jim and I went down the road' or 'Jim and I did this,' just like he was a real person, but he was imaginary.

"I started writing this song, and I was real open. I wasn't trying to hide Biff from anyone. You know, when you're a kid, you don't tell anyone about your imaginary friends because they yell at you. When you're an adult, you don't talk about them because they'll take you away. Anyway, I was real open in this song, maybe more than I meant to be."

Feller took the song to Cash, who listened and gave his verdict.

"I'll never forget what he said," Feller said. "John told me it was a children's song for grownups, and he said it wouldn't fit on the children's album."

Consequently, Feller had no one to record the song. When Cash closed his publishing house, he gave Feller back any songs he wanted, and among the ones he took was "Biff The Friendly Purple Bear."

"I took it everywhere — Dolly Parton's publishing company, Jerry Reed's publishing company — and no one knew what to do with it," Feller said. "Finally I was doing an album and I put the song on the album.

"WIRE Radio in Indianapolis called my record company, United Artists, one day and said 'You don't know it, but you've got a hit on this album.' They had played "Biff The Friendly Purple Bear," and had gotten lots of phone response to it."

United Artists released the song as a single and it became a top ten record for Feller. Mac Davis heard it and liked it, and sang it on his television show a couple times, and also recorded it.

"It's been my most requested un-hit," Feller described the song. "A lot of people remember it. I think that's because a lot of people had imaginary friends. One night when Mac sang it on his television show, a man in the audience told about this imaginary alligator named Cragnog that had lived in the stream behind his house. Just this past Christmas a man tracked me down. He said he's heard the song 15 years ago and he wanted a copy of it to play for his granddaughter.

"That song is real unusual. I have done it in very crowded, noisy barroom situations, and by the time I'm halfway through it, the room will have gotten real quiet and people will be listening to the lyrics to the song. It's never failed to happen that way."

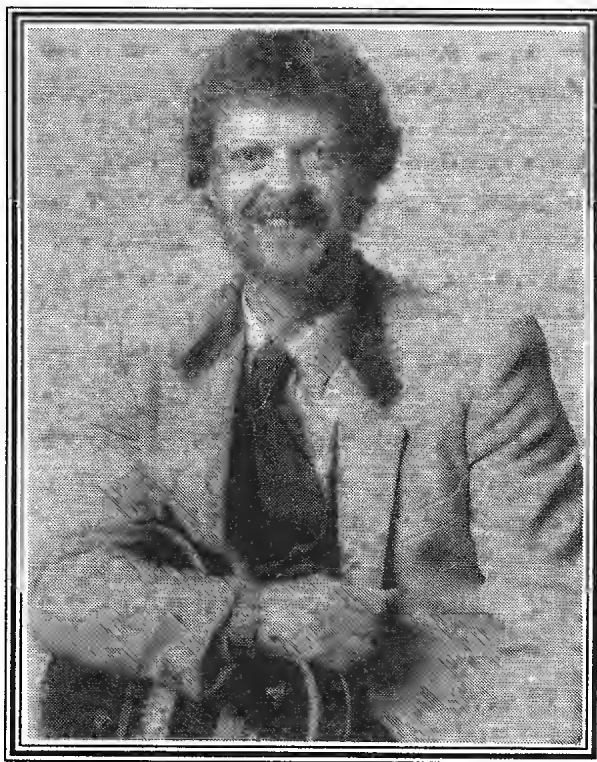
Feller said he's thought about turning the song into a children's book and

record, maybe even a television show, but hasn't concentrated on making that project happen.

"I try to make people feel — feel happy, feel sad, just feel," Feller wrote in the liner notes for the *Dick Feller Wrote* album that includes "Biff The Friendly Purple Bear." "(I try) to say what everybody feels and can't say. To make 'em say 'yeah man that's the way it is.' All (my songs) are based on real emotions. I only supply the experiences."

Feller offers some sound advice that is as pertinent today as it was the day he wrote those liner notes.

"A songwriter is an observer — a reporter — a voyeur of emotions. Peeping into hearts and heads. Tell what and tell why, if anybody knows why. You can steal a style and technique but what you say has to come from your own senses and experiences — and that of others." □



Dick Feller

OWIN' YOUR SOUL TO THE COMPANY STORE

. . . Or At Least To Your Publisher



A friend of mine came by my office the other day. He's a successful songwriter with a top ten country hit last year, some great cuts in the can and all sorts of exciting holds that feel like cuts.

He was depressed.

He needed to do something besides writing songs, he said, and the more I talked with him, the more I realized that the problem wasn't creative burnout, but rather money.

Like most successful writers in Nashville today, his draw is substantial, or at least decent, but it ties up his performance as well as his mechanical income.

"I'll need another two hits as big as the one I had last year to get me into the black," he said, and he knows by the time he gets those hits, he'll be so much deeper into the hole that it'll take a couple more, etc. In short, he'll probably have to write a crossover hit or a standard if he ever wants to see any real increase in his financial position.

For many successful songwriters in the country music industry, a publishing deal is like owing your soul to the company store. You sign with the publisher at a time when you have no royalties in the pipeline and then, by the time you get a real money-making cut, you're so far in the hole that your only financial benefit from that cut is knowing that maybe your publisher will renew your option for another year.

Don't blame the publishers. They're not writers' benevolent societies. They're profit-making institutions. They know that writers' draws and demo costs will eat them alive if they don't take a businessman's attitude with their writers, no matter how incredibly awesome the talents involved.

So what's the solution?

There appears to be a handful of writers in Nashville who have managed to get beyond the company store existence. Some of them have done it on the strength of one hit so big that it takes care of their basic needs. But most of them have reached that plateau as a result of endless, intensive, year-round effort — writing, pitching, if necessary politicking — in short, handling their writing careers like the driven businessmen they are.

That's not a putdown. Throughout modern history, many artists who have translated their talents into long-term financial success have demonstrated a business sense far beyond that usually associated with their profession. So if you're one of those songwriters who has survived on the streets of Music Row for a decade or so, making a living without building a professional

position, now might be the time to put in that extra effort. Perhaps one day your next PRS statement will go to YOU, not the company store.

A few months back I ended a column with the overused chestnut "It ain't final 'til it's vinyl," and suggested that with the new technology, somebody ought to whip up a line of doggerel for DAT. A slew of writers considerably more creative than I sent in suggestions. The one that hit me came from Michael Cello of Manhasset, New York. "Keep it under your hat until it's DAT," he said, and that brings me to today's finale.

Rumor has it that a number of Nashville record executives favor eliminating the sale of country singles because they fear that if country fans began to go back to buying singles, especially in DAT or CD conformations, they would detract from album sales, thereby diminishing the all-important bottom line. I'm curious as to what readers think about that, considering the importance of singles airplay to a songwriter's bottom line. I'll state the question this way: Why should there be country singles anymore? Please address your answers to me in care of our editor, the legendary Vernell Hackett. You might wind up here in this column instead of me, and wouldn't that be a refreshing change? ☐

Michael Kosser is legendary himself, having written what many consider the ultimate songwriting book if you're considering a move to Nashville, "Bringing It To Nashville." He's also put pen to songwriting paper as well as columns, and he's worked with a number of country acts and publishing companies.

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It All Begins With A Song

Former Columnist Happy To Be Back



Greetings — Songwriters.

How sweet it is to be in touch again after a long absence from *American Songwriter*. Career changes have made it possible now for me to keep in touch with songwriters everywhere — and I think all of you know my feelings about the songwriter — Songwriters are the taproot of the music business.

I shall always say "It all begins with a song!" and my support will never falter, whether for that songwriter who has "made it," that songwriter who will "make it," or to that songwriter who may never be published but who has written his words and music to his own real satisfaction. What more is there, my friends? Fulfillment of self — that to me is what songwriting is all about.

As we move into the nineties there are many changes taking

place in every facet of our lives, including our world of songwriting. In each issue of *Songwriter* I shall attempt to address these issues, as I see them. I shall welcome your questions, as well as any disagreement you may have with anything in this column. It is speaking back and forth on any issue that makes the world move in its cycle.

This writer is facing the nineties with anticipation of all things good for the songwriting community, and with insight toward the correction of any legislation or other matters which we feel deeply would be of detriment to that most important segment of our industry.

Once more, I welcome this opportunity to remain in communication with the readers of *American Songwriter*, and also embrace the time I have not to give to this column.

Let's hear from you — and never ever forget — It all begins with a song! □

Maggie Cavender is Executive Director Emeritus of the Nashville Songwriters Association International and was inducted into their Hall Of Fame last year. At one time she was administrator of Alabama's Maypop Music Publishing. She continues to operate Maggie Cavender Enterprises in Nashville.

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Fogelberg Speaks Out On Today's Music

Consistent Writer Says 80's Decade Produced Trash

By Nina Diamond Perry

Dan Fogelberg was born and raised in Peoria, Ill., where he began playing music professionally at the age of 13. His late father Lawrence, a versatile musician and teacher, was immortalized in his son's song, "Leader Of The Band." His mother, Margaret, was a classically trained singer.

Fogelberg is a private man with a deep love of the countryside. He lives on a Colorado ranch with his horses, chickens and four cats.

AS: When you started playing, were you writing songs too?

DF: Yeah, absolutely, since the beginning because the biggest influence on me at that point was The Beatles, 1962-63, and they wrote their own songs, so when I started playing I thought, "Gosh, they write their songs, so should I." So I started writing very early, some real silly things.

AS: Do you remember any of them?

DF: Not very many, and I don't really have anything on tape. Actually there's one thing called "Maybe Time Will Let Me Forget" that was our first record. The Coachmen, my second band, recorded two of my songs. And it was a moderate hit in Peoria. Everybody thought we were stars because we were on the radio.

AS: What was the first song you wrote that you took seriously?

DF: There were a lot of them that never got recorded. I took all of them seriously. "Maybe Time Will Let Me Forget" was a big song for us a kind of signature tune for us. A lot of stuff in college that didn't make it into *Home Free*. Now, "To The Morning" was written in college and it made it there, and "Stars" and "Wysteria" and those were better songs that I wrote late in high school. I was just starting to understand serious songwriting, not rock and roll songwriting. "To The Morning" strikes me as the first one where I said, 'hey this is really good, I'm gonna record this.'

AS: At such a young age (16) you were writing like someone 20 years older.

DF: Oh I don't know. The Beatles were pretty young when they were writing their stuff, too. They were 21 and 22.

AS: Yes but it has that wise old man looking back at what's happened to me feeling to it.

DF: I listened a lot to Joni Mitchell so I was really influenced by her. I didn't really know what I was doing, I was just expressing

— kind of copying her (laughs). That first album has a lot of her influence on it. And Gordon Lightfoot, Stephen Stills and Neil Young and The Beatles. That was really intelligent music, all of those people. I wasn't going to write "Mony, Mony" or something I aspired to higher art from the beginning.

AS: Did you ever write poetry?

DF: A little bit, not much. I'm not a very good poet. I'm a good lyricist.

AS: If you take the music away from your lyrics you have very good poetry.

DF: Some of it is alright, some of it just lyrics. Great poetry is something entirely different, which I don't do.

AS: A lot of it on *Nether Lands* and *Innocent Age* is great poetry. It can stand apart from the music.

DF: Yeah, those were two very lyrical albums. Those were a kind of highwater mark, as far as words, for me. It depends on what you're dealing with. If you're dealing with big themes like that you have a tendency to wax a little more poetic. *Exiles* album is very down to earth — just very basic lyrics, which to me are more effective 'cause they're really painful and truthful, very honest and simple. I almost prefer writing that way these days.

AS: How do you maintain the consistency that your songs have had for all these years?

DF: I don't know that I do. The critics will say that I don't. Sometimes you do good, sometimes you don't do so good. That's in every artist's life. I think the consistency comes from keeping moving, not stopping. I try to break consistency. I am my own worst critic.

Are there going to be oldies stations for the 80's? I doubt it. 'Cause they all sound alike and it's just trash.

AS: You do not give in to the latest fad. When disco came it was like you were on Venus.

DF: I did *The Innocent Age*. (laughs) I like to make music that I'm interested in. Disco didn't interest me. A lot of the things on pop radio have never interested me. I'm interested in different forms of music.

AS: You have the freedom. The record company lets you do what you want to do.

DF: (laughs) Yeah, gosh, I sell a billion records for them, why shouldn't I! They say why knock a good thing. I've always had the choice and they've always known that I'm going to do exactly what I please. If they want to be my record company, fine. If they

don't I'll go somewhere else. So it's always been a really good relationship. They've always said, 'we love what you do, continue doing it.' Which is great.

AS: What do you hate about the music business.

DF: That it's become so narrow and mechanical. As a songwriter I'm outraged by what is on the Top 40 radio these days. The demographics of Top 40 radio have gone really young, which is fine, I guess it's always been that, but in the last year or two it's gotten...unless you're 13 there's really not much on that you want to hear, and that's too bad because the artists that are doing really good work are not getting on Top 40 radio, myself included. They wouldn't play any of *Exiles* on Top 40.

AS: They wouldn't even play the title cut?

DF: No, it wasn't released as a single. They're in a thing now where if it's not machine funk they don't program it. And there's only about 20 songs they play on every rotation in Top 40 radio, and the only ballads they play the same as MTV, are from a movie. Because the movie companies put up big bucks to promote those songs. I'm being played on adult contemporary. I always joke that I'm the King of AC. My records still get a lot of airplay on AC, and there are a lot more AC stations than Top 40. It's just that Top 40 stations reach the young record buyers, and that's where you sell mega albums.

AS: You know you're old when you start complaining about the music the kids listen to.

DF: I find myself doing the same thing, but it's not just kids listening to it. Unfortunately, it's everywhere in this country and that's what drives me crazy. You can't walk into a shopping mall or a clothing store without this drum beat going on in your head. It's like noise pollution. I don't even like that stuff. And there are no songs involved. It's a producer's medium. They come up with a trick of engineering with the drums out front and they put a very minimal amount into what the song's about. The songs are just garbage. What are you going to remember as the great songs of the 80's, like you did in the 60's? Are there going to be oldies stations for the 80's. I doubt it. 'Cause they all sound alike and it's just trash. All the heavy metal bands sound alike, they're just so homogenized. It's become such a commercial medium I think people are more interested in the money than the music. And it started out as a kids' medium for expression for music. And now it's become another business. It's run by corporate lawyers and accountants.

AS: How did you write "Tucson, Arizona (Gazette)?" Did you

read about that in the paper and then write it?

DF: No, actually it was very strange. I was going to sleep after working one night real late, about three, and this whole first verse just flashed into my head: "Tony keeps his Chevy locked up like a virgin in his garage." And I thought, ah, I ain't sleepin' tonight! (laughs) So I got up and wrote most of the poetry to it, which I don't do a whole lot, usually I do music first. And I worked on that song for years after that, but it just flashed into my head and the story started developing as I imagined it. "Tucson, Arizona, rising in the desert like a mirage," and I thought I'm onto something here. I finished it over about a two year period. Some of them don't come easy. When you try to force them you write bad songs.

Somebody says we need this by tomorrow...but generally I do pretty well. "Run For The Roses" was written for a specific instance, for the Kentucky Derby. They just asked me to come and perform, and I said, well as long as I'm goin' down there, why don't I write a song? It was live on television. I just wrote the song in two days and went to L.A. and recorded it about two weeks before the Derby. I like it a lot because I love horses.

AS: Do you write songs when you feel terrific?

DF: Oh absolutely. A lot of them. I feel great when I write a song, because I've gotten one done (laughs). Everytime you write a song you think, oh God, is that the last one? Is it gonna dry up? "Leader Of The Band" — I was feeling terrific when I wrote that — it was a tribute to my father. It was wonderful, there was nothing sad about that.

AS: It was very poignant.

DF: Yeah but it's not sad. It's a strong statement of love. There are a lot of love songs, they're not all about failures (laughs). "Begger Game" is a wonderful song about

love, and so is "Longer." There are a lot of them, and there will be more.

AS: Who are your musical influences apart from the people we've talked about?

DF: Eric Clapton has been a great influence on me as a guitarist. My guitar playing is directly attributed to him and B.B. King. Classically, Aaron Copeland, Greig, Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Debussy.

AS: If you could be remembered by one song or album, which would it be?

DF: The *Innocent Age* album. I just think that's a real good piece of work. All of the (songs) on that album. □

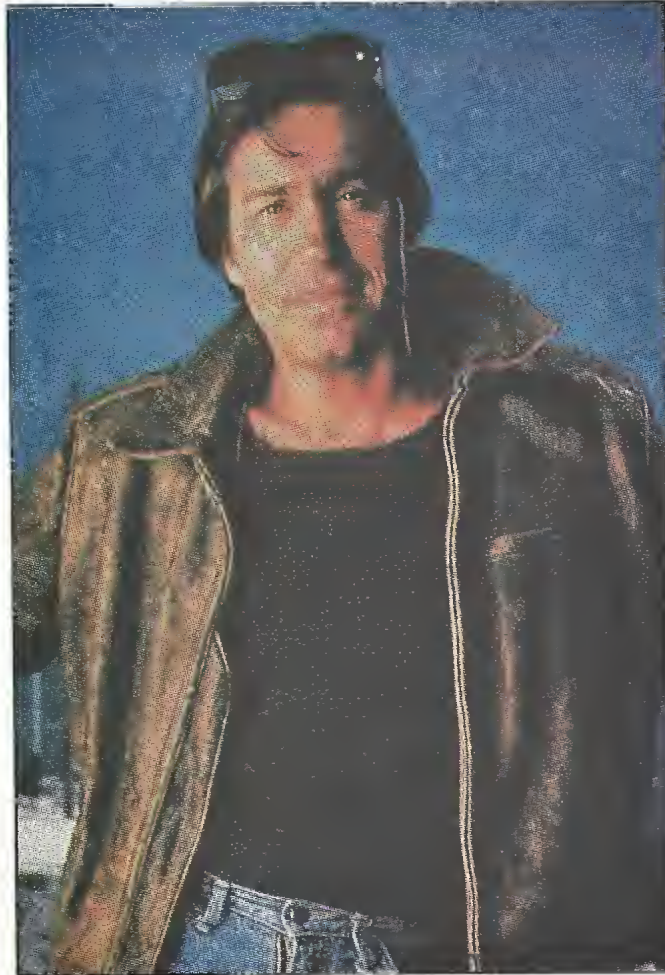


PHOTO COURTESY H K MANAGEMENT

Dan Fogelberg

Combining Two Careers Works For Pitchford

Songwriter Writes Both Songs And Screenplays

By Deborah Evans Price

Dean Pitchford seems to be one of those individuals talented enough to succeed in any endeavor which he chooses to apply himself. He's achieved success as an actor and screenwriter, but he's probably best known as a songwriter.

A native of Hawaii, Pitchford has played the lead role in the New York cast of *Godspell*, the title role in *Pippin* and in Joseph Papp's production of Michel Legrand's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*.

Few tunesmiths have garnered more accolades than Pitchford. He won an academy award for songs he wrote for the movie *Fame*. Melissa Manchester won a Grammy for Best Female Pop Vocal with Pitchford and Tom Snow's "You Should Hear How She Talks About You." He wrote the screenplay and lyrics for the movie *Footloose* which spawned two number one songs from a soundtrack that sold more than 12 million copies. The soundtrack stayed at number one on the *Billboard* charts for 10 weeks and earned Dean two Academy Award nominations, a Golden Globe nomination and five Grammy nominations. Consequently, he was named BMI's Songwriter of the Year in 1984.

The Pitchford/Snow tune "Don't Call It Love," recorded by Dolly Parton, won BMI's Robert J. Burton award as Most Performed Country Song of the Year. Other hits Dean has written are Eric Carmen's "Make Me Lose Control," Ruth Pointer's "Streets of Gold" (with Snow for the movie *Oliver & Co.*) and the Cher/Peter Cetera duet "After All" (also with Snow).

Pitchford's talent for lyric writing developed out of the volumes of poetry he wrote throughout high school and college. He never really thought about becoming a songwriter; his ambition was to be an actor. While singing with a band in New York, doing commercials, singing jingles and working towards his Broadway career, he met a writer named Alan Menken (*Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Little Mermaid*).

"He was and still is a New York songwriter," Pitchford says.

"Alan was a terrific teacher. He heard me do some stuff of his with my band. He suggested we write together and we wrote very fast. I'd bring him lyrics and he'd set them (to music) in half an hour and we'd sit and have coffee the rest of the morning. I don't know that anything was especially commercial, but it was very satisfying to have it happen so fast and it kept the juices flowing."

During his formative days as a songwriter, Pitchford also collaborated with Rupert Holmes and Peter Allen. He wrote several songs for Allen's Broadway show *Up In One*. When the show opened, Michael Gore was in the audience with his sister Lesley and the only lyricist in the program he didn't know was Dean.

"He asked Peter about me afterward and Peter was very lavish in his praise and very kind about our collaboration," Pitchford recalls. "So Michael called and said 'I'm working as music supervisor on this new movie called *Hot Lunch*. Would you be interested in working with me?' And I said 'yes'."

After they finished the project and Dean had moved to Los Angeles, Gore called and said they were changing the title and

asked if Dean would like to collaborate on a title tune. Dean returned to New York and after a month of writing they had the song. *Hot Lunch* became *Fame*. The movie and soundtrack were incredibly successful, also spawning a hit TV show.

"*Fame* was the second song I ever had recorded," Dean says, "and a year later it won an Academy Award. That was very encouraging. Then I came out here and was introduced to Tom Snow and began working with him.

"Tom is a very astute writer and he helped me enormously. It's hard to walk into a room and meet a person for the first time and sit down and write a great song. It happens, but sometimes you go through a breaking in period where you get used to each other's styles

and you kind of wear each other down and start moving like a well-oiled gear."

When asked if his background in theater influences his songwriting, Pitchford readily admits it does. "I write screenplays as



PHOTO COURTESY BMI
Dean Pitchford

(Continued on page 32)

PITCH-A-PAK PRESENTATION FOLDERS

Here is an innovative idea. A custom designed presentation folder specially made for the Entertainment Industry. These folders are created for Artist or Songwriters to present themselves or for Industry Professionals to present their Artist in one professional, organized package.

The folders come in three configurations; the Cassette Demo - Pak, which has pockets for an 8 X 10 Photo or cover sheet, Business Card, 8 1/2" X 11" Paperwork and an Audio Cassette Tape. A Music Information Card is provided to show the "Style of Music" and "Selections on the Tape." A blank card is also provided for those who wish to personalize. The other configurations are the Cassette Mini Demo-Pak (holds a 5 X 8 photo) and the VHS Mini Demo-Pak.

These folders are a must for the Artist/Songwriter who is serious about their craft and their careers. These Demo-Pak folders can be pitched to prospective Record Companies, Managers, Agents, Publishers, Producers, Financial Sponsors and others.

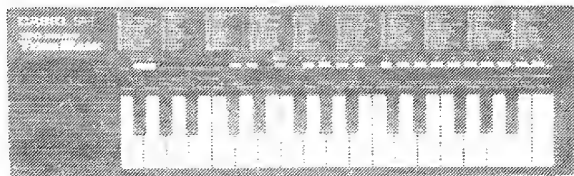
Available colors are: Red, Burgundy, Gray, Blue, White and Black. The Paks cost \$7.96 each with price breaks available on quantities of 50 or more. For more information write to: **Pitch-A-Pak, P.O. Box 566, Reseda, CA 91337** or call (818) 343-1307.



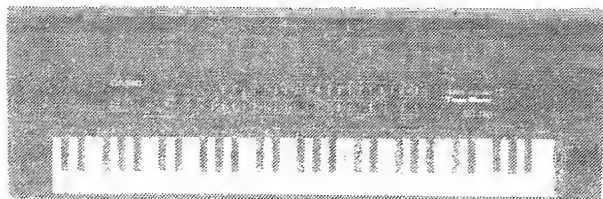
NEW CASIO KEYBOARDS

Casio has introduced four new model keyboards which will appeal to all consumers from the beginner to the more accomplished musician. They range in price from \$40 to \$400, so that there is a keyboard to fit most budgets. Songwriters should find one of these instruments helpful when putting music to lyrics.

Model SA-1 - A mini-sized keyboard geared for the beginner. It has an 8-bit PCM (pulse code modulation) sampled sound source and a built in speaker. The SA-1 has 100 different instrument sounds...all listed right on the face of the instrument. This 32 mini-key, two-note polyphonic keyboard also has 19 background rhythms and 13 accompaniment patterns, all PCM. The SA-1 is battery powered and can be taken anywhere. Suggested retail: \$39.95



Casio's SA-1 mini-size keyboard. Up to 100 different sounds possible.



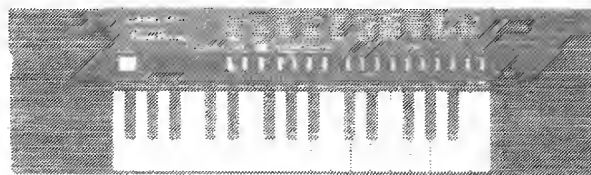
Casio's MT-740 "ToneBank" mid-size keyboard. Up to 465 different sounds possible.

Model SA-20 - A mid-size version of the SA-1 keyboard but has two built-in speakers and 10 background rhythms. Suggested retail: \$69.95

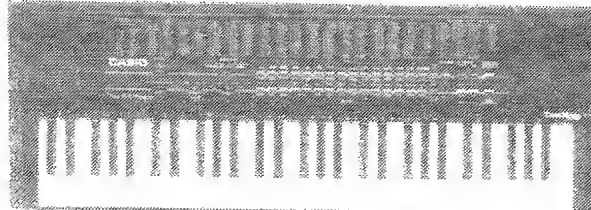
Model MT-740 - Casio's first 61-key mid-size keyboard. It has 12-bit PCM (pulse code modulation) instrument sounds with the unique "ToneBank" capability that makes up to 465 sound combinations possible. The MT-740 has 20 background rhythms using 46 PCM sound sources and is MIDI compatible for use with personal computers. Suggested retail: \$299.00

Model CT-650 - A standard size keyboard very similar to the MT-740 but is 10 note polyphonic and has dual speakers with stereo delay and panning. The CT-650 has a demo song and operates on D size batteries (included) or with an optional AD-5 adaptor. Suggested retail: \$399.00

For more information write to **Casio Music Division, 570 Mt Pleasant Ave, Dover, NJ 07801** or call (201) 361-5400.



Casio's SA-20 mid-size keyboard. Up to 100 different sounds possible.



Casio's MT-650 "ToneBank" standard-size keyboard. Up to 465 different sounds possible.

How Words Changed Jordan's Life Forever

Once in ev'ry life
Someone comes along
And you came to me
It was almost like a song

You were in my arms
Right where you belong
We were so in love
It was almost like a song

January through December
We had such a perfect year
Then the flame became a dying ember
All at once you weren't here

Now my broken heart
Cries for you each night
And it's almost like a song
But it's much too sad to write

It Was Almost Like A Song



Archie Jordan

This short motif practice has been a great factor in my writing style. In "It Was Almost Like A Song," I began with a five note motif. Once I found the motif I really liked, I almost knew what the entire rest of the song would do. After I introduced the motif, I then used a technique Bach often used called a descending sequence. I took the motif and simply moved it down a step, down another step, then down one more step until I resolved to the tonic. It may be clearer if you take a look at it. Even if you don't read music, you'll be able to see the pattern.



That explains the verse. The bridge, or "B" section, was also a variation of the motif but rhythmically I used sixteenth notes instead of eighths.

Once I was satisfied with my melody, I recorded it in my home playing the melody very simply on the piano. I then sent the melody to Hal David. In a week or so Hal called me and read the lyric. I will never forget when he read the line "and it's almost like a song, but it's much too sad to write," how much it touched me. I really felt we had something and so did my publisher.

Tom, David and I pitched the song aggressively, but nothing happened for quite a while. Then Jim Foglesong cut a very nice version on Roy Clark. I was very excited, but Roy decided not to put it on his album, and though it was discouraging to me because that would have been my first major cut, I said to myself, "well maybe something better will happen down the road." Sure enough it did.

Tom played the song for Ronnie Milsap, who really liked it and did his own tremendous arrangement. Upon hearing Ronnie's version, RCA was a little hesitant to release it, since they thought it might be too pop. Also, the song didn't have a chorus, something most of Ronnie's songs had at the time. Finally they decided to take a gamble on it. Thank the Lord it was a big hit.

To this day, I still study the masters of American popular song: Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein. Although styles change, I believe the same principles will always apply.

One last note to remember. A few short lines of lyric and a simple melody can not only be entertaining, but can change someone's life. □

Archie Jordan joins us, picking up where John Ragsdale left off with the "Music" column. Ragsdale is hard at work with Ray Stevens, and we decided to put Archie to work. You can write to Archie in care of American Songwriter, 27 Music Sq. E., Nashville, TN 37203. We'll see that he gets your cards and letters. Please do not send tapes or lyrics.

These 16 short lines, written by Hal David, changed my life.

I moved to Nashville in 1975 and was fortunate to land a job as a staff writer with Pi-gem & Chess Music, run by Tom Collins. David Conrad, Tom's right-hand man, played four of my songs for Tom, and as a result I was hired as a writer.

The first year, Tom required me to write two songs a week. Although he knew every song would not be great, he knew this much exercise would develop my skills in the craft of songwriting.

It was clear to all of us that my strength was in writing melodies. I had been attracted to beautiful melodies since I was a small boy. My lyric writing was developing, but I just did not have a handle on it like I did composing the music.

The biggest break of my career, I believe, came when Tom arranged a meeting through ASCAP with Hal David, one of the greatest lyricists of all time.

I put down on tape four of my best melodies, which Tom played for Hal at the meeting. Tom informed me that Hal liked the tunes and took them back home with him. A couple of weeks later, I received a call from Hal and he had written some lyrics to one of my tunes. It was truly a dream come true for me. Out of those first four songs, we did have a number one easy listening record called "I Never Said I Love You," but that was released much later than "It Was Almost Like A Song," which has been my biggest hit and the song that started my career rolling. I won't do a detailed analysis of the song since John Ragsdale did a fine job of doing this several issues back.

I will tell you a little bit about how the song actually came to be written. I've always been a big believer in using a musical motif (a short musical phrase) to base the entire song on. My favorite film composer, the late Max Steiner, did this often. Probably my favorite melody, which was composed by him, is the theme from *Gone With The Wind*. It was based on a motif of only four notes. It always stuck with me how a short four note phrase could be so beautiful and almost impossible to forget.

Irving Berlin Wrote Hits Year After Year

A Songwriter Who Wrote For The Masses



As a songwriter, Irving Berlin had little of the sophistication of a Cole Porter, none of the musicianship of a George Gershwin, and his lyrics bore no resemblance to the literacy practiced by a Larry Heart. Yet, there has been none like him in the field of popular music.

For Berlin - born Israel Baline in a town called Tsmun or Temryuk (he was never sure which) in Russia - has written the great themes, the anthems, really, of American music. Examples abound.

Patriotic: "God Bless America". Were a popular vote taken, this would be the national anthem, not "The Star Spangled Banner." Berlin donated all of the royalties earned by this spectacular hit to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.

Easter: "Easter Parade." Written in 1933 it has been, in the 55 years since the ultimate Easter holiday song. Who among us cannot sing the opening lyrics: *In your Easter bonnet/With all the frills upon it/You'll be the grandest lady/In the Easter parade?*

Christmas: "White Christmas." If Berlin had written only this song he would have become a wealthy man. When the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) began its Recording Hall of Fame, this one was among the first five songs voted into it. And why not? It has been recorded in more than 30 languages, and it has sold - here and abroad - at least 235 million copies. The figure, however, must be hopelessly outdated because it keeps selling every day of the week of every month.

Berlin said he got the idea for the song while sitting in California and dreaming of the crisp, cool air back home in his favorite place, New York City. He needed a Christmas song for the 1942 movie *Holiday Inn*, and "White Christmas" was it.

When he took it to the movie's star, Bing Crosby, the crooner allowed as how it was "a catchy little tune." When his recording of it, made in just 28 minutes, was released, nobody, but nobody, saw it initially as the megahit it became.

But getting back to Irving Berlin's propensity for writing anthems-

Show Biz: "There's No Business Like Show Business." This one was very nearly accidental. Jerome Kern had been selected to

write the score for a new Broadway musical titled *Annie Get Your Gun*, based on the life of the legendary cowgirl-marksman, Annie Oakley. Kern died suddenly and the call went out to Berlin. He checked into an Atlantic City hotel in the dead of night and three weeks later emerged with songs like "Anything You Can Do," "Doin' What Comes Natur'ly," "The Girl That I Marry," "I Got The Sun In The Morning," "You Can't Get a Man With A Gun," and "There's no Business Like Show Business."

When it came to writing motion picture musicales, his works for the likeness of Fred Astaire were classic: "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," "Cheek To Cheek" and "Let's Face The Music And Dance."

All of that output, and so much more, he pecked out at his piano; all in the key of F sharp because he never learned to transpose to any other key.

His first big hit came in 1911, when he was asked to write a song for the annual Friar's Club show in New York. It was titled "Alexander's Ragtime Band." After that - well there were the likes of "Everybody's Doin' It" (also 1911), "Simple Melody" (1914), "I Love a Piano" (1915) "A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" (1919), "Say It With Music" (1921), "All Alone" and "What'll I Do" (1924), "Blue Skies" (1927), "The Song is Ended But The Melody Lingers On" (also '27), "Puttin On The Ritz" (1929), "Soft Lights And Sweet Music" (1931), "How Deep Is The Ocean?" (1932), the year he also wrote "Let's Have Another Cup O' Coffee" and "Say It Isn't So," "Heat Wave" (1933), "Isn't This A Lovely Day" (1935), "I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket" (1936), "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm" (1937), "Change Partners" (1938) and "It's A Lovely Day Tomorrow" (1940).

Endlessly it seemed: "Be Careful! It's My Heart," "Let's Take An Old Fashioned Walk," "You're Just In Love," "Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep," and even a bunch of songs that might be in the country vein: "When The Midnight Choo Choo Leaves For Alabama," "I Want To Go Back To Michigan," "Down On The Farm," "If You Don't Want My Peaches, You'd Better Stop Shaking My Tree," "Mandy," and "Crinoline Days."

With such a repertoire (and it is not meant to be a complete list of hits by any stretch of the imagination), should anything about Irving Berlin surprise you? It should not.

Irving Berlin turned 100 in 1988. Last year, the world lost a wonderful songwriter who has touched us all with his music. □

Chet Hagan is a multi-faceted writer, having written television scripts, novels and magazine articles: among the books he's written are *Country Music Legends* and *The Great Country Music Trivia Book*. This article is reprinted and updated from *American Songwriter* July/August 1988.



PHOTO COURTESY ASCAP
Irving Berlin

Lyric Contest 6 Winning Songs

The winner of Lyric Contest 6 is Scott Ivy of Mexia, TX. His song "The Faith Of This Tender Lad" was selected as the best of this group of entries by our panel of judges from the music industry.

Runner-up winners include Buddy Farler of Antioch, TN for "Roses On The Floor," Richard Lippman of New York, NY for "Close Your Eyes And Fantasize," Tom Schreiber of Edmond, OK for "Old Brownie," Amy Tansey of Cincinnati, OH for "Give Me A Sandwich (And Love Me)," Michelle Gilliland of Lathrop, MO for "Aqua Velva And French Perfume," and Michael Thomas Kelly, a previous winner, of Gallatin, TN for "Heaven Knows They Took An Angel."

The other entries who had substantial votes from our judges are listed under "Noteworthy." All of these finalists are to be commended for their work.

American Songwriter, Casio Keyboards and Gibson Guitars sponsor a new contest in each issue. Entry forms for the next contest are in this issue. Scott Ivy not only wins the Epiphone guitar from Gibson, but he joins our previous winners Brian Sugg and Thomas Crook, Randy Houston and Patrick Stotler, Michael Thomas Kelly, Bob Stamper and Chris Embrick for the chance to win the Grand Prize Chet Atkins SST guitar.

The lyrics of the winning songs for this contest are:

WINNING ENTRY

The Faith Of This Tender Lad By Scott Ivy

On a warm September evening
He stood there all alone
Talking to his Mama
Who lay beneath a stone

Chorus

He had walked five miles on gravel road
To Make it there that day
To that little country graveyard
Where his precious Mama lay
And he did not understand just why
His Mama had to go
But he trusted in his Jesus
To save her blessed soul
And he knew someday he'd see her
So he wasn't really sad
And the angels smiled from way up high
At the faith of this tender lad

He had no store brought flowers
For the times were tough and hard
So he brought with him some daisies
He found out in the yard

And by the time he reached her grave
They were wilted from the sun
But the angels up in heaven smiled
At what this child had done

Chorus

RUNNER-UP

Roses On The Floor By Buddy Farler

You'll find roses on your doorstep
Tonight when you come home
I came by to see you
But you had already gone

I smelled your perfume in the breezeway
I saw your car leaving the lot
Either I came by on the wrong night
Or somehow you forgot

Chorus

There's a teardrop on the welcome mat
That lies outside your door
A flower vase in pieces
And roses on the floor

I left a note out in your mailbox
To say my last good-byes
I know we planned to work it out
But you won't even try

I wasted my time and every penny I had
Down at the flower shop
Either I came by on the wrong night
Or somehow you forgot

Chorus

You'll find roses on your doorstep
Tonight when you come home

Close Your Eyes And Fantasize By Richard W. Lippman

If you're tired of losing and want to be a winner,
Have Candice Bergen invite you to dinner,
Your face appear on the cover of Time,
And have a one-man show at the Guggenheim.
You can have it all...sure as the sun will rise.
What you do is close your eyes...and fantasize!

Want to spend the night with Warren Beauty?
Or, the rest of your life with him in Tahiti?
Walk into a room and get a standing ovation?
Own a thousand acre rubber plantation?
It's all yours...no need to compromise.
What you do is close your eyes...and fantasize

Fifteen minutes of fame is a joke.
A week would be just a tease.
So how much of the world would go up in smoke
If you had a lifetime of fame in your fantasies?

Want Kenny Rogers to sing every song you write?
Take over General Motors without a fight?
Dow Jones to ask you for Wall Street tips?
George Bush to come over to read your lips?
No problems, my friend...let me verbalize.
What you do is close your eyes...and fantasize!

Old Brownie By Tom Schreiber

Every Kansas farm has a bull
Ask the farmer, his bull's the pride of the country
But my grandpa's hull was scraggly and brown
So we just called him "Bronwie"

He'd jump the fence about once a week
And we'd have to go and get him
My grandpa would find a big old stick

And he's go after him and hit 'em

Then old grandpa figured out
What he'd do to him and how
He'd call the vet and tie him down
And relieve Brownies urge for a cow

Chorus

They took a knife to old Brownie
He's walking funny now
Yes they took a knife to old Brownie
He has need for a cow
Yes, Grandpa fixed old Brownie
He stays in the barn yard now
He doesn't want to jump the fence
And he dam sure don't need a cow

Brownie used to snort and paw
Manly things that bulls do
But now he mostly prisses
Eatin' daisies and honey dew

Chorus

If Brownie only knew
He would surely lose his pride
If he found out what he had lost
Wound up country fried

Give Me A Sandwich (And Love Me) By Amy Tansey

We were a happy family, until you read some book
on how the way to please a man is to super clean and cook
now you make the bed before I'm even up
you sanitize and sterilize every coffee cup

You wax the floors until I can see myself
there's not a speck of dust to be seen on any shelf
you've turned our kitchen into a gourmet restaurant
but you don't understand what this man really wants

Chorus

Just give me a sandwich and love me
that's all I'm asking from you
give me a sandwich and love me
'cause I love you for you
not for what you do

You scrub the tub and polish every tile in the shower
you do the laundry every hour on the hour

you iron all my sweat socks, put
starch in my blue jeans
but if I wanted that much good
housekeeping I'd buy the magazine

When you're through with cleaning
you cook and clean some more
you never seem to hear me everyday
when I implore
if only things were like they were in
our old happy home
this man of yours would very gladly
live by bread alone

Repeat Chorus

Bridge

If I were ever granted just two simple
wishes
I'd wish for a sandwich and a sinkful
of dishes

Heaven Knows They Took An Angel

By Michael Thomas Kelly

I can still taste the coffee
that she used to make
and the little kiss she'd give me
to make sure I was awake
and the sounds of her footsteps
across the kitchen floor
still follow me each morning as I go
out the door
the sad look on her face, the little tear
in her eye
I can still see her clearly waving me
goodbye
and I miss her so bad, I can't believe
she's gone
so far away from me, so far beyond

Heaven knows they took an angel
when they took her away from me
Heaven knows there's no question
she was all that I could be
Heaven knows they've got the
answer to my one and only dream
Heaven knows they took an angel
when they took her away from me

I used to hurry home each day
to see her after work
just to find her standing there
in nothing but my shirt
and the smell of her perfume on her
pillow next to mine
makes me feel like she's still there
when I close my eyes
the touch of her hand, her sweet lips
kissing mine
oh it's more than I can take to know
it's all just in my mind
I need her so much, I just can't say
goodbye
My life is so damned miserable I
wish that I could die

Repeat Chorus

Aqua Velva And French Perfume By Michelle Gilliland

Staci drives a Mercedes
Johnny a beat up truck
She wears 24k jewelry
His rabbit foot brings him good luck
They met one summer night
In a bar called the blue room
Who'd ever think they'd get together
Aqua Velva and French perfume

Aqua Velva and French perfume
As different as night and day
How does it make sense
Opposites attract that way
When you're looking for a lover
Don't ever just assume
Someone isn't your type
It could be Aqua Velva and French
perfume

He likes meat and potatoes
She likes caviar
She loves to ride in his truck
He waxes her car
They're talking of a wedding
Becoming bride and groom
Who'd think they'd get together
Aqua Velva and French perfume

Chorus

I love my Aqua Velva and French
perfume

NOTEWORTHY

The Singer's Prayer
By Steve Bounds
Catlin, IL

She's Miss Texas (To Me)
By Vem Daily
Wills Point, TX

I'll Spend My Happy Hour At
Home
By Vem Dailey
Wills Point, TX

You Leave With My Looks
By C. David Smith
Orlando, FL

He Belongs To The Land
By Sue Stater
New York, NY

SEE PAGE 34 & 35 OF THIS
ISSUE FOR CONTEST
RULES AND AN ENTRY
FORM FOR THE NEXT
LYRIC CONTEST

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

American Songwriter Magazine Publisher, Jim Sharp, announced that the panel of judges from the music industry had been unanimous in their decision on the selection of the best lyrics submitted in contest covering the last twelve months. Chris Embrick of Jefferson, GA was declared the winner of the Chet Atkins SST guitar courtesy of Gibson Guitars in Nashville. Chris' winning song is reprinted below and we hope to run a photo of him in our next issue. Also listed below are the winners of each contest.

American Songwriter and Gibson Guitars sponsored the lyric contest for six consecutive issues with Gibson giving an Epiphone guitar to each individual contest winner. The sole purpose of these contests are to promote the art of songwriting and to give the readers an opportunity to become actively involved in songwriting.

No Heart Of Mine By Chris Embrick

I can feel you holdin back
afraid of my touch
And I wonder who was fool enough
to hurt you so much
And my heart aches
just watching you
To see you hurting so
And if I had someone like you
I'd never let you go.

I know you're trying hard to leave
the hurt behind
And I can't blame your heart
for taking all this time
And my heart breaks
just thinking back
To heartaches of my own
Girl, if I had someone like you
You'd never be alone.

And....No heart of mine
would ever want to leave you
No heart of mine
would ever hurt you so
No heart of mine
Would ever leave you lonely
No heart of mine
Would ever let you go.

Because.... No heart of mine
would ever want to leave you
No heart of mine
would ever hurt you so
No heart of mine
would ever leave you lonely
No, No heart of mine
would ever let you go.

CONTEST #1

Lucky One To Have A
Reason To Be Sad
By Randy Huston
and Patrick Stotler
Lexington, KY

CONTEST #2

April's Fool
By Brian Sugg
and Thomas Crook
Amory, MS

CONTEST #3

Waitin' On The Man
By Michael Thomas Kelly
Gallatin, TN

CONTEST #4

Familiar Strangers
By Bob Stamper
Madison, TN

CONTEST #5

No Heart Of Mine
By Chris Embrick
Jefferson, GA

CONTEST #6

The Faith Of This
Tender Lad
By Scott Ivy
Mexia, TX

Mullins Finds Success Through Love

He Takes A Different Path

By Deborah Evans Price

There are a lot of reasons for becoming a songwriter — for the money, for the glory, for the self-satisfaction that comes from sharing ideas and simply for the love of writing a great song. After a conversation with contemporary Christian songwriter Rich Mullins, it's easy to see he falls into the latter category.

Mullins' approach to the profession of songwriting is very different from most people. When he was first approached by a publisher, he wasn't sure he wanted to sign a writers contract, and when he writes a great song, he doesn't always show it to someone the next day.

It almost seems as if Rich Mullins has become a hit songwriter in spite of himself. If he seems hesitant to follow the conventional path to songwriting success, it's because his idea of success is different. He gets more satisfaction from the process of creating songs than he does from the accolades that follow their release.

Rich believes songwriters should write for enjoyment, not for profit. "Money will perish and they'll perish with it," he says. "And they will have missed the fun of having written beautiful songs, having said something that really mattered without any kind of ulterior motive."

Writing for pleasure is a philosophy that has worked well for Mullins. He's written 39 of the 40 songs that have filled his four Reunion Records albums. Debby Boone and Amy Grant have recorded his songs. He's been nominated for two Dove Awards, the first in 1983 for "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" recorded by Grant. This year he's nominated for "Awesome God." Three of his songs have reached number one on A/C Christian radio — "Verge of a Miracle," "Awesome God" and "If I Stand."

A native of Richmond, Ind, Mullins began writing at an early age. Developing into a Christian songwriter seemed like a natural step for Rich. Raised in a Christian home, he became a member of an inter-denominational youth choir, attended college at Cincinnati Bible College and then began working with Zion Ministries.

His songwriting talents came to the attention of Amy Grant's managers, Mike Blanton and Dan Harrell, when they heard "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" on an album released by Zion Ministries. Blanton had been looking for one more song to include on Grant's

Age to Age album and he wanted that one.

"When they called me I didn't know who Mike Blanton was. He said he was Amy Grant's manager and I didn't know who Amy Grant was," Mullins recalls. "Mike wanted to know if the song was copyrighted and if I had a publishing agreement. I said 'well as far as I know it's not copyrighted' and he said 'we'd like to talk to you about publishing rights' and I was like 'I really don't want to talk about all that stuff, it sounds really boring to me.' They could have taken [advantage of] me, but they flew me down to talk. I was fairly hostile toward the Christian music industry at the time because being from the rural midwest, we believe that religion should be costly, not profitable."

Blanton and Harrell soon earned Mullins' respect. They reached a publishing agreement and with some advice from his church he resolved his feelings about going commercial with his music.

Mullins signed with Reunion Records as an artist and released his self-titled debut lp in 1986. In addition to being a singer and songwriter, Rich plays nine different instruments, among them piano, guitar, hammer and lap dulcimer, mandolin, and some brass instruments.

"Picking up an instrument that I don't know anything about how to play and figuring out how to play it can be very inspiring for me as a writer," he says. "Different instruments have different character and the character of the instrument can inspire a song of the same character. I wrote one song on the last album on the fife because we were backpacking and it was the only musical instrument I had with me."

When asked to describe his songwriting method, Rich explained, "I start out writing the accompaniment and it generally sounds to me like a

movie soundtrack. Then I imagine what would be going on onscreen. It all happens simultaneously and the lyrics are like subtitles."

Mullins says writing every day helps tunesmiths improve their craft. "Write a lot and make a lot of mistakes," the 34 year old songwriter urges. "When you're writing, don't worry about writing a great song. There's no crime in writing a crummy song. Anyone that ever wrote a good song wrote some real flops."



PHOTO COURTESY REUNION RECORDS

Rich Mullins

(Continued on page 30)

BRITISH PUBLISHER IS SUCCESSFUL IN L.A.

By Al Caudell

It was the philosophy that there is a great potential for success with publishing in the United States. "It is the song market of the world right now," says Frank Petrone of EG Music, Inc., Los Angeles, commenting on the company's decision to open an American office. "The songwriter is so much a part of American culture."

Founded in 1969 to manage the popular rock group, King Crimson, license their records and handle their publishing, the British-based company has become a mainstay of the European music business. Expanding in 1970 to include artists like Emerson, Lake & Palmer and T-Rex, EG later added Bryan Ferry, Robert Fripp, Roxy Music and Brian Eno. The publishing branch, EG Music, represents these catalogs internationally.

Petrone says EG, which opened its American branch in January of 1989, has deliberately started small in order to work closely with a select group of writers. The current roster includes Cal Curtis, who wrote "Second Chance," a top five single in the states for .38 Special; Walter Egan, whose "Magnet And Steel" duet with Stevie Nicks was a worldwide top five hit; and Duane Hitchings, who has worked with artists like Rod Stewart, Kim Carnes, Joan Jett and David Lee Roth. Ashley Hall and Canadian writer/artist Joel Wertman round out the roster.

Linda Komorsky heads EG's American staff, while Petrone serves as manager of creative services. Komorsky spent several years working in entertainment law before opening her own company in 1984 to administer publishing services for several major artists. Petrone started in retail record sales and then moved to the mailroom at EMI in Los Angeles in the early 80s. He worked his way up to vice president of talent acquisition there before moving to Arista Music and briefly to Dick James Music as professional manager.

"I think Linda's philosophy, and mine as well, is that we never want the ratio of writers to creative people who work with them to be so distorted that we're not representing our writers properly," Petrone said.

"Let's say a staff writer comes in with a great new song. The situation at EG is a little different from other larger companies. I'm really involved in the process of almost going through the song as it's being written. In other words, our writers bring me

work in progress. I'm in constant contact. We want to stress that writers can get me on the phone at any time, they can call me at home, they can get feedback while they're writing, so we can arrive at something they love and I love. It helps the pitching process because, obviously, I'm going to go to bat for these things.

"It's my job to keep up my contacts with A&R people at the record companies, producers, and artist managers. I compile lists every two or three months of people who are looking for material, who the contact is and what kind of material they want. It requires a lot of tenacity and a lot of legwork."

Petrone explains that a writer who can also network on his own and does his homework has an edge in getting cuts.

"Hopefully staff writers are out there as well, watching MTV, reading the charts and listening to the radio. It's tougher and tougher to nail a song on an album now. People don't want album cuts anymore; they want 10 potential singles.

"The common goal is getting the songs out there, and writers networking to the point where they're meeting people will only help. Those who get out there are usually more successful and are going to end up with more cuts faster than the guys who sit at home."

While he says that EG's policy is not to accept outside material, Petrone acknowledges that people get in through referrals, and outside songs can be considered at times.

"Even though we're basically staffed, I still meet with writers and accept tapes because I'm always looking for that one great song. We picked up a song not too long ago that I saw a lot of potential in from a couple of outside writers I'd known. One of them is signed to another publisher, but the other one had her publishing available and we picked it up because I really think we can

get it cut."

In looking for a staff writer, Petrone is looking for certain key elements, but not always the same ones in each writer.

"I love it when a writer is capable of writing both music and lyrics. I look for a writer who can be a bit left of center, yet still accessible. I love it when they're not writing what everybody else is. We're looking for that certain spark that says this guy is better than the last 20 guys you've met with."

And how does he know such writers? "A lot of it is word of



PHOTO COURTESY EG MUSIC

Linda Komorsky Walter Egan Frank Petrone

(Continued on page 30)

EG Music

(Continued from page 29)

mouth, or referrals. When I got to EG, a lot of it was calling writers I had known over the years and asking who they know, who was on the street, and names started flowing back to me. It's just a vast array of networking and phone calls and tips."

Petrone says EG does not have a preference for writer/artists over writers, although most aspiring pop/rock writers in L.A. want to perform and collaborate with other artists.

"A way songplugging has changed in the late 80's is that in addition to pitching, you try to hook your writers up with a band, thus increasing the odds of getting your songs on the album. It's become a way to get cuts now. It also gives the band or artist a sense of sharing in the creative process."

Petrone had several pieces of advice for writers who think they'd like to hit the west coast.

"I would try smaller, independent publishers first, and I would establish some sort of phone contact before coming out. Don't be persistent to the point of obnoxiousness. If you can get an assistant on the phone, a lot of times that's an accomplishment, because they're the people who work directly with the creative people. If you can get a professional manager on the phone and he says he doesn't have time for a meeting, but send him a tape, be happy with that.

"I would say it would be helpful to hang out at clubs, local venues. They are frequently attended by publishers and A&R people, and it's a great place to rub shoulders with other writers and musicians. By all means get the trades, read them, find out who people are. You've absolutely got to do your homework." □

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Mullins

(Continued from page 28)

"People have this idea that writing is real fanciful, wildly creative, like let's have no limits. It is just the exact opposite because you have to make something fit into words and that is the first limitation. Then as a music writer you have to fit that into a very exact set of limitations. Limitations is really what you're dealing with, not freedom."

As dedicated as he is to his craft, there are some aspects of writing that Rich doesn't enjoy. For example, he doesn't pitch his own tunes. "I never pitched in the first place," he says. "That's one advantage to having a publishing company is they do the pitching for you. I would be awful at pitching."

Mullins is also sometimes reluctant to let his songs go once he's written them. He held onto "Awesome God" for a long time before let shared it with many people. He penned the tune on his way to a conference in Colorado, where he taught it to a group of kids.

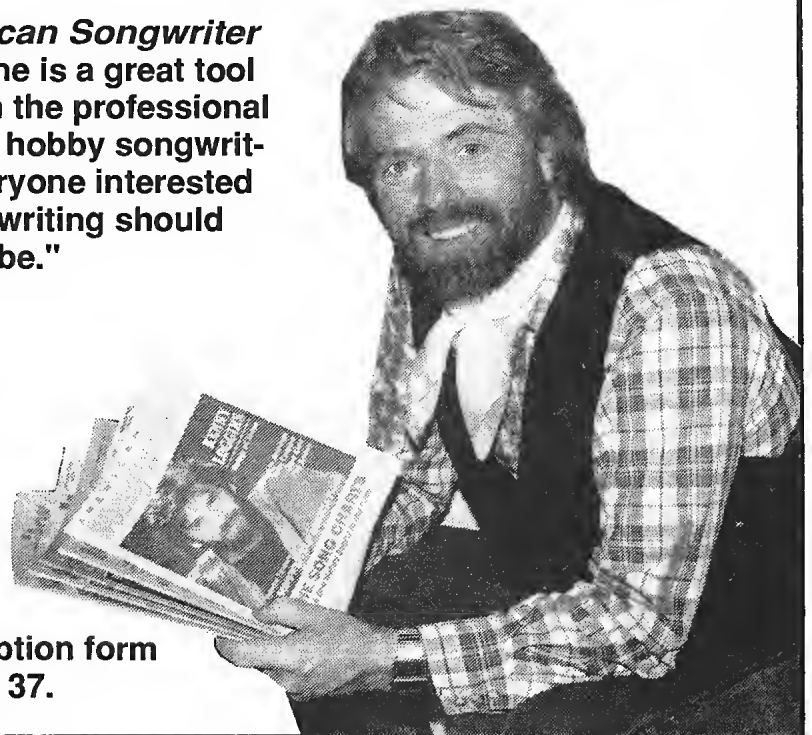
"The first time I heard them do it, it was one of those songs where you kind of

go 'did I write that?' I don't know if it's a great song or not, I don't know how can you tell what a great song is, but I know that it had a definite power. I knew then that it would be very well received in the Christian market and that's why I didn't tell anybody that I wrote it for a year. Something happens when a song becomes popular. It's like you have to be willing to give that song up and let people have it as their own. Then it's not as personal anymore and I guess I just wanted to enjoy that song awhile before I gave it up."

Many aspiring songwriters have often been told if they could do anything else for a living they should do it. Rich Mullins agrees with that advice. "You have to have a certain shamelessness to write," he says. "You have to be willing to drop your pants in front of anyone that might want to look. And you don't do that because you're proud of it, you do that because you have to write. It's not a choice you make if you're a writer. You write because you have no other option, not because you're getting cut, not because what you're doing is great, not because it's important, but because you could not go through a day without writing." □

Michael Martin Murphey Says:

"American Songwriter magazine is a great tool for both the professional and the hobby songwriter. Everyone interested in songwriting should subscribe."



**Subscription form
on page 37.**

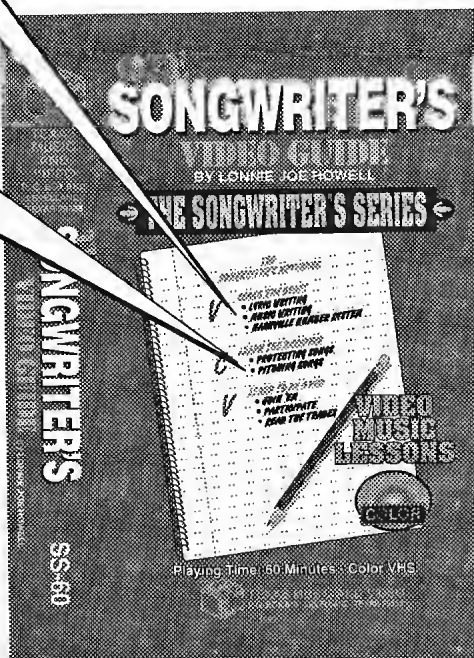
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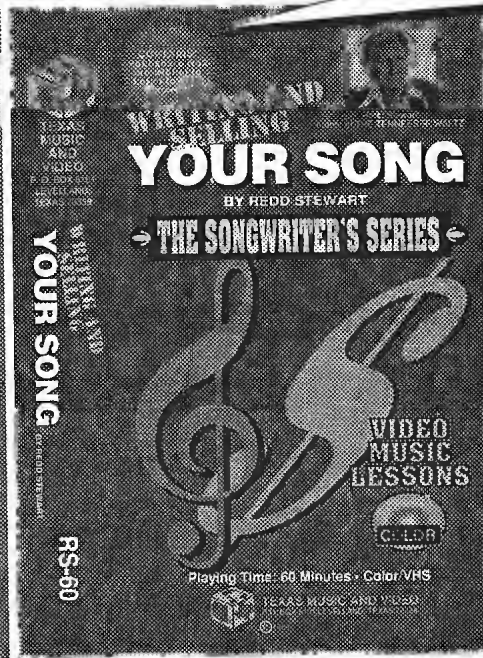
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Pitchford

(Continued from page 22)

well. I feel the same thing both lyrically and with screenplays. I know what it's like to be a performer on stage and feel naked because you have nothing to do or coming to a stretch of dialogue that is real unsatisfying and you don't quite know what to do with it. So I try to tighten things so that every time anybody opens their mouth to sing or say something they have something to deliver. Either it's a preparation for a payoff or just the payoff.

"I also think of songs as little one act plays. People tell me they cry at the songs I write. I think that in order to get someone to cry in three minutes, you have to start from ground zero and get them on the train and slowly move the train out of the station. Never lose them; keep them going to a point (that) by the time they get to the chorus they can't help themselves. That takes a lot of honing and working."

Pitchford sees rewriting as an integral part of the songwriting process. He feels songwriters have two separate identities within them. "Writing is easy, it's the rewriting that's a bitch," he says. "When I talk to young songwriters I tell them there are two people in their heads. You have to keep a real even balance between them. One is the creator and one is the editor. The creator is the one that goes gush, gush, gush and pours it out and fills up the pages. The editor is the one that sits to the side and goes 'I don't know about that line. I don't know if that works.' The torment comes when only the editor is at work. If you can hit that stride where the two

of them are working together that's really the joy of creating."

Pitchford spends six months a year on his songwriting, then wraps up tunes he's co-writing, finishes projects and closes the door on that part of his career and spends the next six months screenwriting. "I could mix the two, but it makes me crazy and I work 18 hours a day and that's not real happy," he comments.

Consequently his approach to writing is more focused. He rarely writes songs and just throws them out there. He usually writes for or with a specific artist who is going in to do an album. Whenever he writes something that wasn't written for a certain artist or he has something that doesn't make it on a project, Brian Rawlings (who used to handle Dan Seals publishing in Nashville) works it for him.

For Dean the greatest satisfaction in being a songwriter comes from knowing he's made someone feel something with his tunes. "If I finish a song and it makes people want to grab some Kleenex or it makes them want to get up and dance then I feel like I've done the job right."

Pitchford also says certain songs hold fond memories for people and he likes being part of the soundtrack of their lives. "When I take a trip or go on vacation I find the pop station in that area and at that given time some song is on the air more often than anything else," he says. "So when you drive around the shores of Hawaii or up and down the California coast one song becomes the signature of that vacation. Years later you can hear it and go right back to Maui. So the prospect that I'll be the hook that will pull somebody's mind back to a time when they were really happy or falling in love and happier than they've even been, that's great. That's nice to be a part of." □

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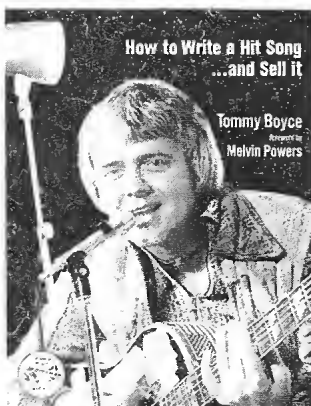
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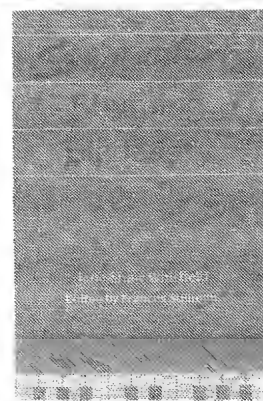
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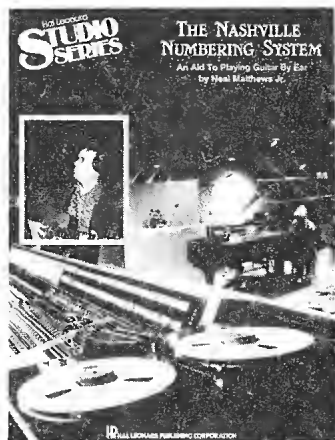
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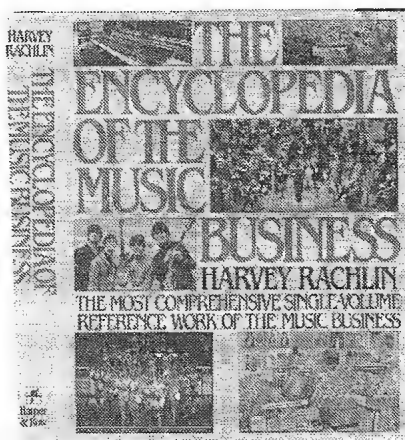
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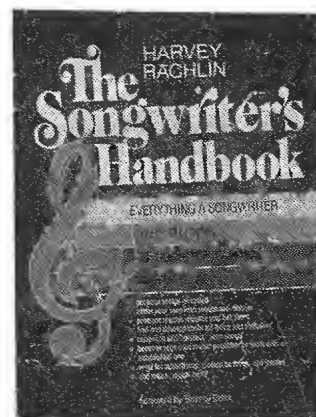
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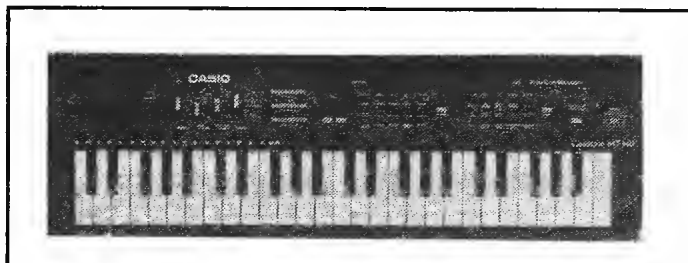
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Co-writer _____

Co-writer _____

Co-writer _____

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If individual writer, sign on line below.

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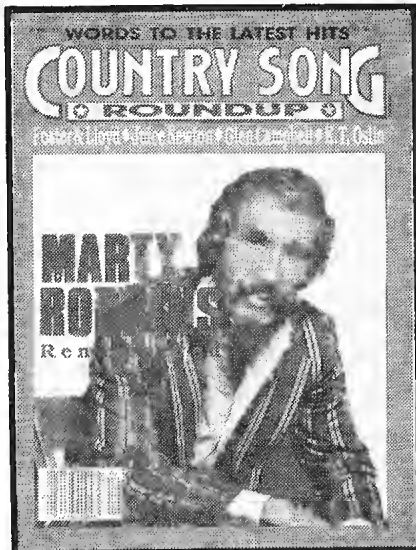
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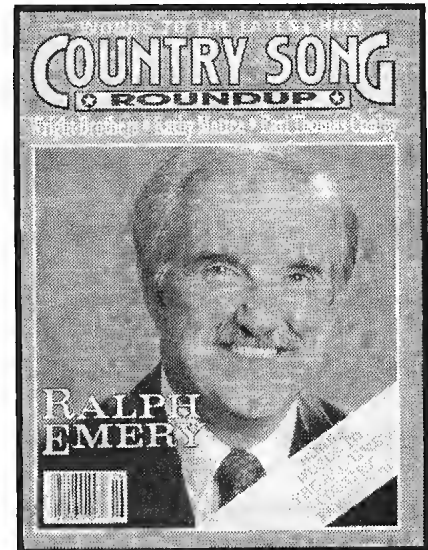
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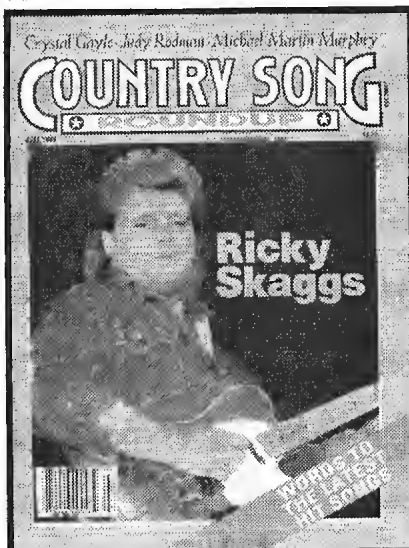
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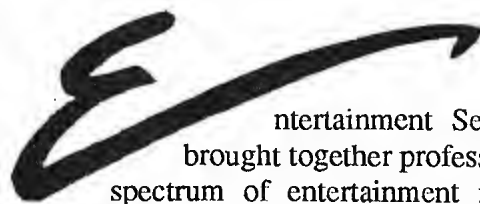
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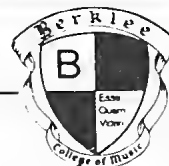
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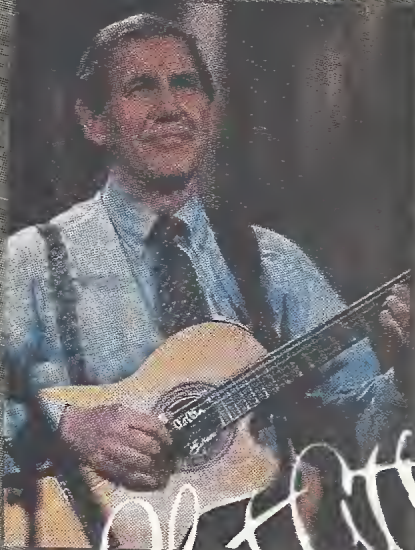
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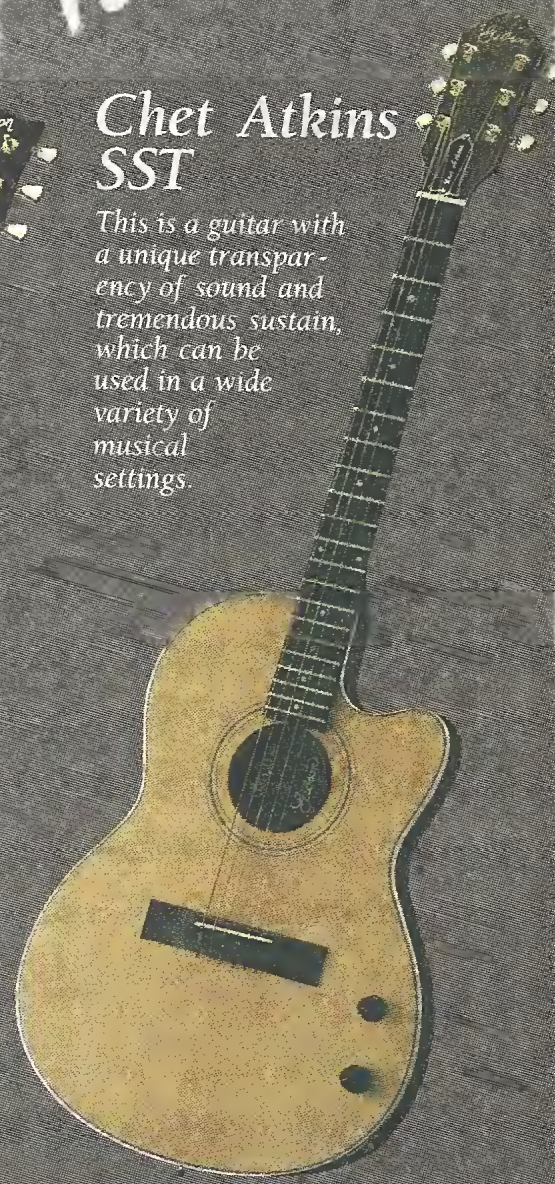
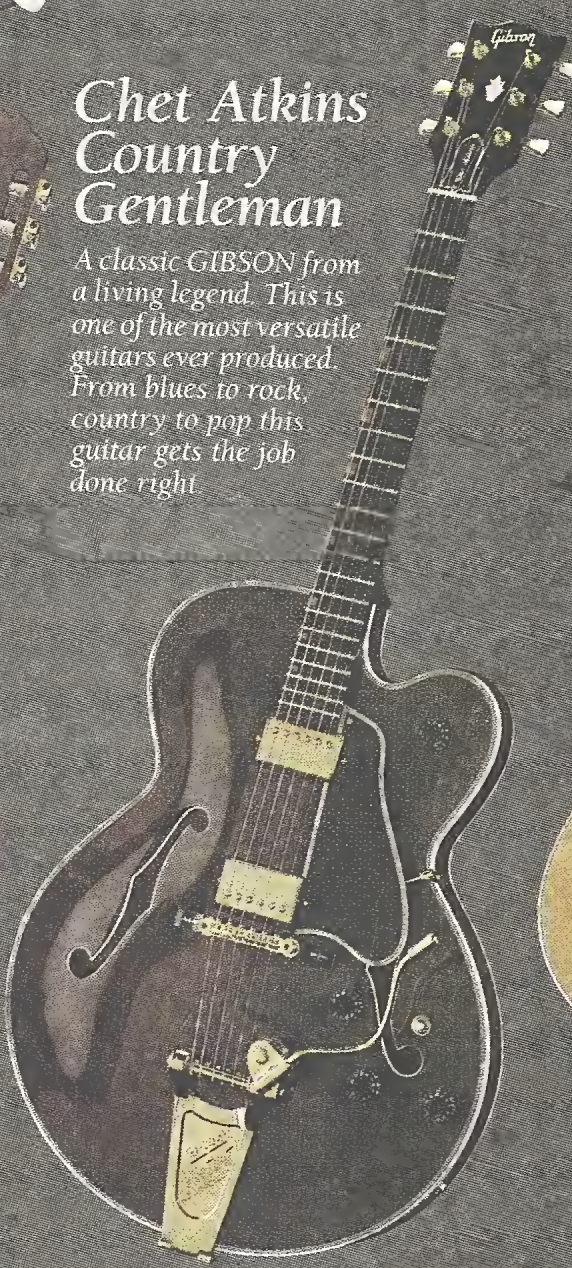
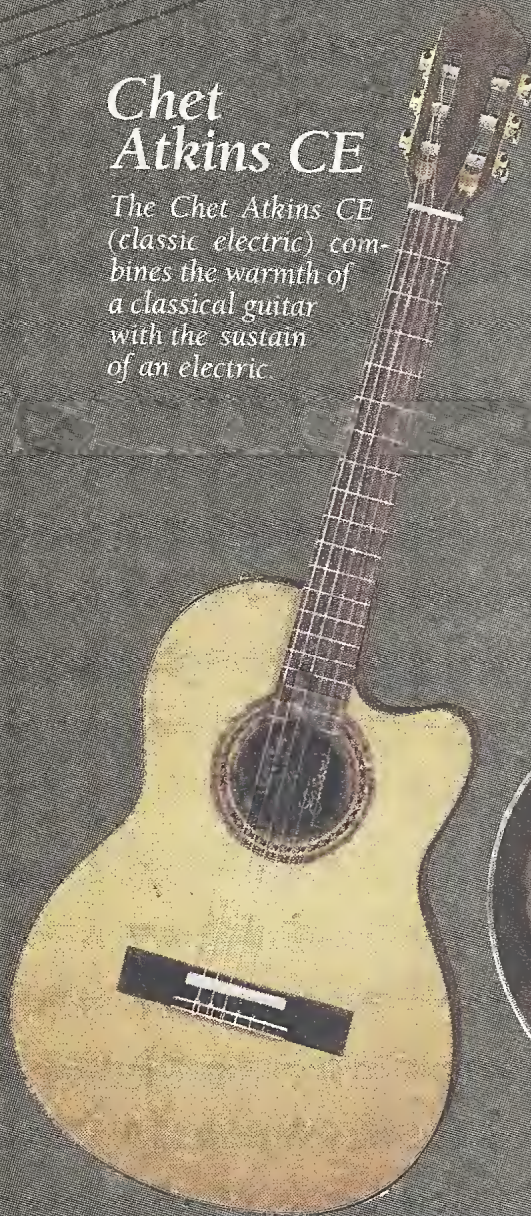
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